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no 26 30p

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hard for years at home
and denying it was work'

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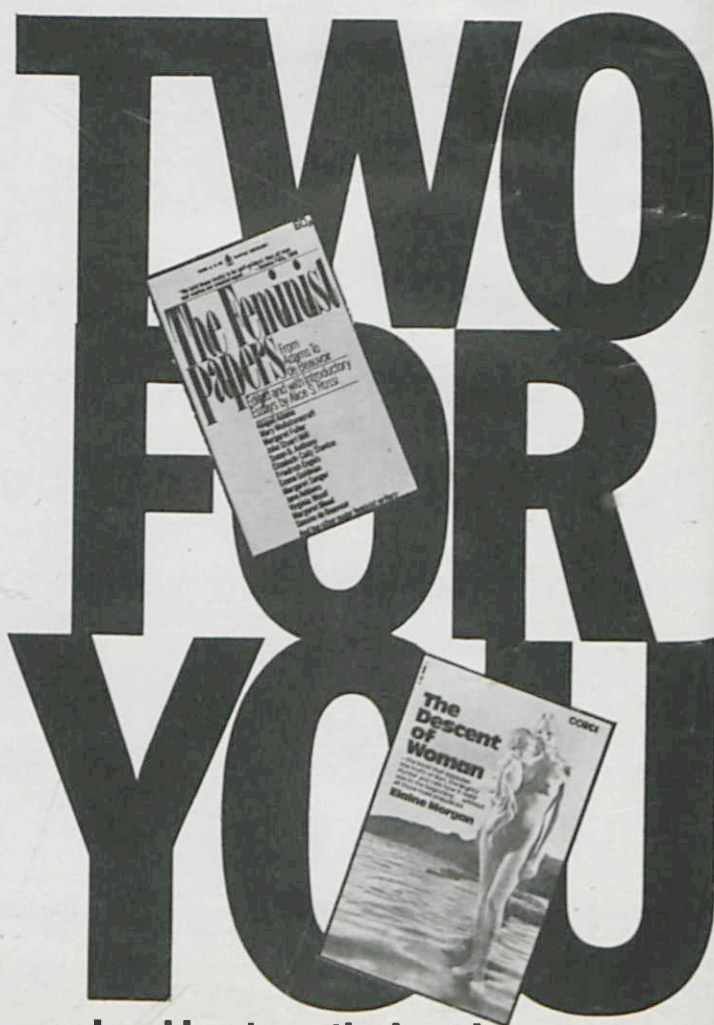
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LETTERS

Wimpy Bar

Dear Spare Rib,
Just a moan from me. I can't understand why my friend and I were turned away from a Wimpy Bar in Park Lane. I had just finished work (I work shifts as I'm in a Hotel) and as we walked in the girl behind the counter said, 'Sorry, we can't serve you'. I said, 'Why ever not? (really getting mad)'. She replied, 'We don't serve girls on their own after 10pm. I could have really argued with her, but my friend and I just left, never to set foot in there again. They must have thought we were prostitutes. My family was very annoyed when I told them.
Sincerely,
Susan Evans,
Loughton, Essex.

Broke

Dear Spare Rib,
*I want to thank you for helping me to understand myself a lot better than I used to. It would be a tragedy if Spare Rib ended and I'm sure I speak for a lot of people when I say 30p is still very cheap for what you do. Although I'm usually broke (I've been driven to Social Security again) I look upon Spare Rib as a necessity and would buy it if it were even dearer than 30p.
Love,
Lindsay Brown,
Surndon.

Immigration

Dear Spare Rib,
*I am sure that all your readers will be as sick as I am that Lena Jeger's bill to stop discrimination against wives with foreign husbands received such shabby treatment from men in May.
I have come to the conclusion that this rule is being perpetuated by men with the aim of protecting and preserving British women from foreigners and punishing those who, like myself, have actually taken this step.
With best wishes,
Sara Jinha,
Tewkesbury

Pre-Menstrual Tension

Dear Spare Rib,
*I was very interested in your recent article on PMT.
I was married, fairly unhappily, for seventeen years and then fell in love with a married man. During the time of the affair I had no PMT at all. But as soon as it finished, my PMT returned - not so bad as before, but again I have headaches, slight depression and the rest.
My husband and I are endeavouring to get together again. Why? I don't know why. Sometimes we say it's for the children, then we say we need each other. I think it's also partly economic and social - where is the single, divorced woman in society, or the single man?
Yours gratefully,
Joyce Marlowe,
London W11.

Kids Books

Dear Spare Rib,
*As a student teacher of English in Middle Schools, I feel rather concerned about the biased view given by Camilla Nightingale on the subject of children's books in the last issue. It seemed to me that the material she assessed was selected more *because* of its anti-female content, than as a representative cross-section of children's modern literature.
In my opinion, one can hardly compare a Classic such as *Little Women* with a Blyton *Famous Five* story or Sutcliffe's *The*

Shield Ring. The former was written by a woman of another era, in which the female role was even more restrictive than today. It seems hardly fair to criticize her for Jo's eventual submission to marriage; on the contrary, I thought it was commendable that Jo married such an unusual person - the complete opposite of the young-handsome-beau idea, whom she met while working far from home and virtually independent. Historical adventure books are similarly restricted. If they are to be at all accurate or even plausible, then they must describe ways of life in which women were even more subordinate.

Ms Nightingale appears to overlook some more modern literature. She completely ignores any 'surrealist' or imaginative novels, such as written by Alan Gamer, for either sex. In such books, concepts are put forward which are so fantastical that they divert all attention from the roles that children play

Even in novels concerning a male and a female child relationship, other factors may make nonsense out of any dichotomy. I can remember reading a very beautiful and brutal book called *Island of Blue Dolphins* when I was 13, which I believe was based on a true story. It described a young American Indian girl's struggle to look after her young brother, when they were accidentally left on the island deserted by their tribe. The boy was killed while attempting to hunt food soon afterwards, and the girl lived alone, until her rescue 20

years later.

Perhaps the real inadequacy lies not with the available literature, but with the lack of knowledge or concern among teachers and parents. Feeling it of minor importance, they direct inquiring children to the 'Classics' or the books they read at a similar age. Few teachers, especially in secondary schools, actually read children's novels themselves. It is this apathy and ignorance which is surely the cause of frustration and confusion among children, rather than the total absence of unbiased, imaginative literature.

Yours,
Manda Matthews,
Chalfont St Giles, Bucks.

Dear Spare Rib,
Camilla Nightingale was right to include *Swallows and Amazons* in her discussion of sexism in children's books, but she missed some interesting things about the very widely read Arthur Ransome books. For example, although the leader of the Swallows is the elder boy John and the leader of the Amazons the elder tomboy Nancy, the real hero(ine) is the youngest girl Titty, who has the best ideas, does the cleverest things, finds the best solutions, etc. Then it is not generally realised that the children in the books are based on real children; and John was in fact based on a girl called Taqui Altounyan, who says in her autobiography, *In Apleppo Once* (1969), that she was quite put out when Ransome turned her into a boy!
Nicolas Walter,
Harrow, Middlesex.

Dear Spare Rib,

*Thanks so much for the article on children's books. As a librarian-to-be, I've read a few hundred children's books this year and have winced in agony at the portrait of women and girls that 99% of them portray. So many articles have pointed out the problem, but I wonder if Spare Rib could do something more positive?

Yours,
Fran Steinberg,
London W11.



7 o'clock and we're smoking again
 Even though I gave it up before,
 Who cares? Well if I don't no-one else will. . .
 Come on, don't take all night; let's make an entrance
 Hi! You don't 'alf look like a mod. . . .
 That's right. . . 15p, have you got change? . . .
 Blimey! it's loud. . . gets right into your guts don't it. .
 Throbbing lights, sometimes
 But it's warm darkness and I can see
 Engrossed faces in the dark
 Teach me that dance. . . heat sweating, heart crashing
 Rock smashing solid walls of sound,
 Heavy on my mind. . . .
 Where? . . . down the pub. . . give us a fag, someone. . .
 here they come. . .
 Hi; got a light? . . . ta. . .
 Smoke?
 Mist drifting in my brain and laughing
 How many have you had? . . . 8 or 9 . . . beer?
 kills your brain cells. . .
 Let's go outside;
 Got a rotten headache
 It's all that booze,
 It's cold outside and
 I think I must be cracking up;
 There's someone crying, somewhere. . .
 Can't stop shivering
 Music echoes distantly and I think I love you
 And we were so turned on. . . Bowie said that once?
 They're shouting at us
 Someone's throwing plates in the backroom. . .
 drunk as hell. . .
 For Christ's sake don't smash those bottles!
 Running. . . what's the time? . . . can't find the light
 Hey, did you boogie too? I don't know, go ask David. .
 do you wanna dance?
 . . . My nerves are going. . . got to get a fag. . . Jesus. . .
 She's fainted. . .
 Got to get out; can't stand it anymore
 Got to get out. . .
 They're all drunk and it's raining. . .

Cover illustration by Sue Slack

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Please send a stamped addressed envelope with all unsolicited manuscripts.

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Spare Rib collective: Rose Ades, Sally Doust, Marion Fudger, Pat Kahn, Rosie Parker, Marsha Rowe, Ann Scott

LETTERS

Electoral imbalance

Dear Spare Rib,

The Liberal Party and its supporters can complain that 6 million voters are directly represented in parliament by 14 M.P.'s, yet it must also be true that 15 million voters (women voters) are represented in parliament by only 23 of the 630 M.P.'s. This is surely an electoral imbalance that ought to be corrected. There are after all, as many women voters as men, so having as many women in parliament might be considered more democratic and more representative.

A simple constitutional way to do this might be to form double-sized constituencies out of existing constituencies, each being represented by two M.P.'s one a woman and one a man and each M.P. being separately elected by the whole constituency. (The Prime Minister and the cabinet would still be formed in the same way - from members of the majority party).

If half the people in parliament were always women, things would of course be different; women would feel much more at home there, and also feel easier about standing for elections. They could then directly help in deciding which laws should be made - laws such as equal pay for women, laws to protect battered wives, laws to increase family allowances, or laws to bring back free school milk. Laws which both men and women could support.

So instead of wasting time and energy trying to influence authorities - campaign for reform, vote for more women in parliament, stand for election to parliament. Constitutional reform is the only possible way of achieving real change.

Yours faithfully,
R.M.C. Chandler,
London NW6.

Bins

Dear Spare Rib,

*Is it surprising that a medical course concentrating on the treatment of diseases rather than people produces psychiatrists with little idea of how to care for illness caused by human emotions rather than bacteria? I feel many of the problems in psychiatry are largely caused by this gap in a doctor's training. After one very disturbing visit to the local 'looney bin' (as the more callous medical students insist upon calling it) I wrote a wee

poem. I don't pretend to have any talent for writing poetry but it seemed the best, even the only way of expressing my feelings.

Best wishes,
Alison,
Aberdeen.

Schizoid Lady in a Mad-Made World

Scream again little lady
Scream to rid yourself of Jake.

But you love Jake and must remember

So you take refuge in the
devil-populated land
Where the empty symbolic
circle expains all
And every face is Jake's face.

But the Drugs Pusher, the
Psychiatrist

Breaks into your circular
haven

Refusing to accept your black
magical madness,
Saying that you have taken the
easy way out,

Not knowing that it is the only
way to go.

Adoption

Dear Spare Rib,

*We were interested in your feature on adoption (No.23), particularly as we are in the midst of adopting our second child, the first being born by me. However, I'm concerned that some inaccuracies in the article might deter would-be adopters.

The most glaring of these was that you must be under 40. Adoption societies and local authorities formulate their own requirements and 'Adopting a Child', a booklet from the Association of British Adoption Agencies, lists all these agencies and, briefly, their requirements. Many agencies will accept parents well over 40, divorcees, agnostics, and so on.

The Parent to Parent Information on Adoption Services, 26 Belsize Grove, London NW3 is an organisation which, amongst other things, aims to find homes for those children who were once considered unlikely candidates for adoption because of their colour, physical imperfections, age or family history of inherited disease.

Carol Burns might have pointed out that fertile couples too can adopt, as we have, although it may be more difficult for them. I don't agree that 'women have children adopted because society is too unloving and unsupportive to help them bring these children up'

- some women, obviously, simply do not want a child, whatever their circumstances.

I share many of Ms Burns' feelings towards her adopted children - but I don't intend to tell David that he is a 'chosen' child. Like the son born to us, he is wanted, but was not in any way selected to fulfil our ideal image, or to fit in with the agencies' estimate of our intellectual capabilities. We were one of many couples who wished to adopt this little boy, and this illustrates how modern adoption techniques emphasise the finding of parents for the child, rather than 'choosing a child' for the parents. A child who is told that he was chosen may very well feel that he was compared with other children and picked out - early indoctrination into the competitive spirit! Worse, he may feel an obligation to live up to an ideal and expectations which his parents are not even aware they have placed upon him. An even worse situation could arise for the children who were born into the family - are they to feel that their parents took pot luck? I recognise that many parents want to comfort and compensate their adopted child because he was unwanted by his natural mother, but pain is part of life and hopefully the family will play a supportive role rather than a totally protective one - 'Yes, it is very sad that your first mother could not make a home for you. She was sad too, but we love you we are your family now'.

Incidentally, it is interesting how one always speaks of the natural mother's feelings and rights, the child's attitude to his natural mother - another instance of women being put in a 'guilty' position in relation sex? I've never heard of anyone asking the natural father his opinions on adoption.

I could ramble on at length - hope I've shed some more light for somebody. Readers interested in the PPIAS will find them most helpful.

Yours,
Janet Baraclough,
Glasgow.

Childbirth

Dear Spare Rib,

I felt I must write back in answer to Christine Beels regarding her views on childbirth.

In her letter she says that with an epidural a mother's pushing urge is not properly gratified. Well, when I had my first baby I had no pushing urge whatsoever and I didn't have an epidural either. In fact, the midwives present had to tell me when to push, as the fact that I was in such terrible pain during the second stage that I was aware the quicker I pushed the sooner I would be out of pain.

She also seems to forget that every woman has a different level of pain toleration, so obviously psychoprophylaxis, which is supposed to raise the pain threshold, is not going to help one woman as much as it will help another.

Also there does come a point in labour (and I have been told this by a few women I know who used psychoprophylaxis) when the breathing and relaxation cannot help at all.

I also think it is unfair of her to say that by dispelling a lot of the fear by teaching pregnant women what is involved this also dispels the pain. Before the birth of my second baby I felt very little fear but was shocked by the amount of pain I experienced. What is the use of dispelling fear beforehand if a woman is going to suffer from shock afterwards.

Like any subject that is taught some people obviously will be able to master psychoprophylaxis better than others and this fact should be recognised by women such as Ms Beels who teach this method.

Surely it is only right that pregnant women should be given the knowledge of all the pain relievers there are available today and then the women themselves should be able to choose how they wish to have their baby delivered. Whether they want an epidural, natural childbirth or have petheidine administered it should be their own decision, but they have the right to know all the pain relievers that are available, I feel I must stress this point.

Both my labour experiences have been entirely different. In my first labour I found the first stage the most painful, whereas in my second labour the second stage was the worst part. I was told by numerous people that a second baby is not so painful as the first time, but in fact I found the pain I experienced even more terrible than the first time, and this was a great shock to me particularly because I was expecting it to be so much easier.

I was never at any time offered an epidural or told anything about them whilst I was pregnant. I would love to have a third child but am terrified at the thought of undergoing such pain again.

I would most certainly have an epidural if I ever had another baby even if it means paying privately for it.

Regarding the side-effects of epidurals I would prefer to have a headache after the birth any day than suffer the pain of labour ever again.

Yours faithfully,
Mrs. F. Sinfield,
Rushden,
Northants.

In recent issues of Spare Rib there have been articles on the feelings of housewives today, and how we can share housework within the family. Now Catherine Hall writes about the history of the housewife.

In 1969 Catherine had her first child (she now has two). This led to an awareness of the changes that take place once a woman becomes a mother, and very soon she was discussing this with other women. From her involvement in this first women's liberation group in Birmingham, came the idea of dropping her work on a thesis as a medieval historian and looking at the position of women.

The History of the Housewife

What does the word 'housewife' mean, and has it always meant the same thing. One of the problems is that it appears to be a 'natural' condition. However much we may deny, at the rational level, that women are born only to marry, have children and look after a home, yet the fact that such has been the experience of the majority of women over many generations perhaps make it difficult for many people to envisage it being different. It's all very well knowing that the sexual division of labour is defined differently in some parts of Africa or Asia, but in England the one definition seems very firmly established. It is, therefore, important to discover the ways in which this division of labour – which sends men out to work and keeps women as an unpaid labour force at home (or sends them out to work to do a second job as a cheap, unskilled, labour force) – has changed over a long period and what have been the causes for this.

We are brought up to believe that it is our biological differences from men that have determined our secondariness – women bear children and are less strong than men – therefore, clearly they must stay at home or do jobs which are not demanding. The more clearly we can say the degree to which women's position is politically and culturally defined rather than biologically, then the better we can know what are the crucial areas to attack in our struggle to change it. It would suit the reactionary forces in this society only too well if we all believed that the family had always been the same and the position of women had only improved – for example, their getting the vote.

Most of the women's history written so far has been the history of exceptional women who have managed, despite all odds, to rise above their disadvantages and do something important – or the history of feminist organisations, most importantly of course, the suffragettes. The recent emergence of feminist historians – and a feminist history group – has marked a significant shift in the kind of women's history which is being written, but for the most part it is still very concerned with women at work or women who have organised themselves. Women at work are much better documented than women at home and once the split between the place of work and the home took place (which began in about the 17th century) it is particularly difficult to establish the home situation of working class women.

It is extremely problematic to work on women at home because of the lack of sources. It is only in the past few years that people have begun to take seriously what 'the house-

wife' might have to say and in the past it has not generally been seen as a matter worth recording. One of the problems is that literary and ideological sources exist in far greater numbers than economic or social data about the organisation of the household. But a major problem about using such ideological sources as published guides for household management is that it is very difficult to estimate what influence they had on the people who read them. It is relatively easy to find household manuals for many periods – often written by men and telling women what they should do. It is much harder to find women themselves recording their activities or commenting on them.



When we do find women's diaries, for example, they are often so imbued with a male view of the world that they accept completely the masculine attitude as to what is important and scarcely mention their activities connected with their homes and children. For the most part, of course, it is only upper and middle class women who write the kinds of documents that survive and the class divisions between kinds of households have always been great. However, bearing in mind all these difficulties, I began to do some research on the history of the housewife – wanting to tackle such questions as whether the job had always been defined in the same way, whether the structure and function of the family had changed, what has been the economic function of the housewife and have attitudes to the socialisation of children changed. The first period that I looked at was the 14th century, since I wanted to consider to what extent the position of women was different in a pre-capitalist economy and what changes capitalism brought with it. ►

To be a housewife in 14th century England meant something very different to what it does today, when it has been decisively separated from the productive and industrial sphere. It still involved domestic work and the care of children, and it was still unpaid: but for a large proportion of women it would also involve many other kinds of work besides - brewing, baking, looking after the poultry and so on. Part of the reason for that was the fact that the family itself, both among the peasants, and in the towns, was a productive unit.

The family means in this context father, mother, often unmarried brothers and sisters, possibly grandparents, children, servants and - in an urban situation - apprentices. In this family the labour power of each individual member is only a definite portion of the labour power of the family. Women were, therefore, themselves centrally related to production, and not only through their husbands. The pre-industrial family was a self-sufficient economic unit and consequently domestic work had a much wider definition than it does now. It might well involve brewing, dairy work, the care of poultry and pigs, the production of vegetables and fruit, the spinning of flax and wool and also medical care - nursing and doctoring. These areas were roughly defined as 'women's work': but there is much more flexibility in the drawing of lines around women's work and men's work - work was done on the basis of task-orientation rather than by way of a rigid and formalised division of labour.

There were some jobs which were always specifically connected with one sex. The higher manorial officers were always men and the dairy-maid, for example, was always a woman. A 13th century manual on 'The Duties of Manorial Officers' gives us an account of the dairymaid's work: 'The dairymaid ought to be faithful and of good repute, and keep herself clean, and ought to know her business and all that belongs to it. She ought not to allow any under-dairymaid or another to take or carry away milk, or butter, or cream, by which the cheese shall be less and the dairy impoverished. And she ought to know well how to make cheese and salt cheese, and she ought to save and keep the vessels of the dairy that it need not be necessary to buy new ones every year.'



Women provided either an explanation for evil or a haven of good.

The two most powerful medieval theories about women were the creations of the church and the aristocracy. The church's view of women was heavily influenced by St. Paul and saw women as the creation of the devil and as both inferior and evil. Marriage was an institution set up to contain the unavoidable sin of sexuality; as Our Lord put it in a vision to Margery Kempe the 15th C. mystic, "for though the state of maidenhood be more perfect and more holy than the state of widowhood, and the state of widowhood more perfect than the state of wedlock, yet, daughter, I love thee as well as any maiden in the world." The aristocracy on the other hand developed the counter doctrine of the superiority of women. This was connected with the cult of the Virgin Mary the adoration of the Virgin in Heaven and the lady on earth. Though the two theories were at different poles, in one sense both combined to give women another worldly role - they were seen as in no way central to political or economic life. This split between the wicked and the divine, the prostitute and the saint represents an ideological split and projection by men which has recurred in many forms. Women provided either an explanation for evil or a haven of good. Neither view had much to do with reality. In Chretien de Troye's romance, "Lancelot", the hero gets into Queen Guinivere's bedroom but Lancelot "holds her more dear than the relic of any saint" and "when he leaves the room he bows and acts precisely as if he were before a shrine". Neither of these theories were taken at face value outside the Church and the aristocracy; but what was clearly already accepted was that women were secondary and inferior.

Because of the need for their labour, women in the village were in a better position than aristocratic women, in the sense that they were involved in productive relations. What this means in fact is that they were free to be exploited in an equal way with men. The feudal economy was based on the ownership of land, which was the major source of power, by a relatively small number: the land was worked by both free and unfree peasants. Few received money wages - the unfree worked on the lord's land in return for renting some of the lord's land. Every peasant was subject to a

lord and in a hierarchical society every lord was subject to another who was ultimately subject to the king. Supposedly there was a system of rights and obligations at each level but at the bottom of the ladder the obligations which the lord owed to the peasant were absolutely minimal whereas his rights were extensive.

Peasant women were able to hold land though the normal assumption was that heads of households would be male - the position of widows in particular has long been recognised as of importance, both because of their longevity and their established rights. Manorial records, as Rodney Hilton has shown, do record a substantial number of women holding land - even as minors. It seems that unmarried women with holdings would usually quickly marry - the labour of the man was as important to the woman as vice versa. However, their right to hold land was only because the holdings were small and would not affect the distribution of power on the feudal estate. Aristocratic women, with few exceptions, could not hold land since land was the key to the feudal economy and once the property rights of a family or aristocratic line came into question women were simply a marriageable commodity. It is clear that peasant women did do heavy work on the land as can be seen from the illustrations of clod breaking and there is evidence that at some points they got equal pay. The question as to whether women labourers were paid the same as their male counterparts seems to have something to do with job definition and bargaining power. Female domestic servants were low paid, for example, because they were subject to non-economic compulsion since they tended to live in the lord's household and could have all kinds of personal pressure put on them. But it would be wrong to associate the respect given to women's labour with a society free from discrimination. Distinctions were of course made in the law, education, the church and in political and property rights between men and women. Peasant woman could not assume the limited rights to property which men had - their rights were much less clear and would probably depend on the customs of a particular locality.



A woman and a man clod breaking to prepare the earth for planting.

Women were, furthermore, subject to particular kinds of exploitation by the feudal lord. At Pittingham in Staffordshire in April 1369, Juliana, the daughter of Roger Baroun, was 'deflowered' by a Welshman and had to pay a five shilling fine to the lord of the manor. A woman who was not a virgin had less monetary value to her feudal lord since a well-to-do peasant might refuse to marry her and consequently the cut of the marriage settlement which the lord got would be less. In 1388 Agnes, the daughter of Juliana Prynce, had to pay ten shillings to the lord of the manor to be able to marry and go as a free woman with her goods.

But abstract theories about the proper role of women were not allowed to stand in the way of meeting familial and social needs. Peasant women were able to play a relatively independent role in day-to-day economic life - they were open to the same kind of exploitation by the feudal lord as were men whereas at other times the appropriation of women's labour has been effected in a more indirect way. This means that women were likely to organise themselves politically in the same way as men. In Halesowen in Worcestershire in 1386, 'A certain John atte Lythe and Thomas Putewey, serfs, by the advice, procurement and maintenance of a certain Agnes, wife of John Saddler, assembled an illegal conventicle of unknown rebels against the abbot... saying openly that they did not wish any more to be considered as serfs of the abbot and would not do any of the previously owed services.'

The social, political and ideological dominance of the male was clear,

however, at the local level. Women were not the heads of tithings, they didn't sit on local juries, they didn't fill the office of constable or reeve. Women with a legal title to a holding could often be obliged to marry and they had to suffer a regular barrage from the Church about their evil influence. Women played a variety of economic roles within the village - they were not all housewives and housewife had a much wider definition than it does now. They were not all housewives because there was a much smaller number of households to the population and there might be several women living in a household whose jobs were as domestic servants or labourers. Peasant women might, according to their age and marital status, be doing a variety of different jobs. They might be doing specifically women's work, such as spinning and carding or in the dairy; they might be doing work which was not rigidly defined as men's or women's - in the fields - ploughing or harvesting; they might be working centred around their own household - cooking, brewery and caring for children or as domestic servants either in the lord's house or in the house of a richer peasant.

Housewife meant the organiser of a centre of production.

Housewife in 14th century England tended to mean the coordinator and organiser of an establishment and of a centre of production. The condition of being wedded to a house was a more substantive one than it is now because the 14th century house had a different function and meaning from the 20th century equivalent. It did imply a status which was, however, considerably limited by the current ideology on the position of women. This reminds us that the ideological forms do not merely reflect the economic but have a life and relative autonomy of their own which can even serve in certain instances to limit and restrict the economic sphere. The economic and ideological demands on women in the village were to a considerable degree in contradiction to each other.

The situation was very similar in the towns - being a housewife was recognised as a particular job but it involved a wide range of domestic activity. Generally there were no frontiers between professional or business life and private life. These activities all tended to go on in the same living/working area. The household was the centre both of domestic activity and mercantile activity. This integration of work and home contributed to the fact that it was not necessary to regard the socialisation of children as one of the most important functions of the family. Children were not seen as a special group - once they were past infancy they were absorbed into the adult household and were educated by the process of life and work going on around them. Domestic service and apprenticeship were two of the major ways of educating and these applied to boys and girls alike (though the evidence as to girls being formally apprenticed is unclear, they certainly were apprenticed and trained informally).



Women carding and spinning.

In a feudal society the notion of service was central both to the relations between lord and master, parents and children, lover and mistress. Transmission of a way of life from one generation to another was ensured by the everyday participation of children in adult life. In the towns, as in



the villages, women were engaged in a wide range of economic activities connected with the family as a unit of production. Women figure in guild records as barbers, furriers, carpenters, saddlers, joiners, and in many other trades. There are relatively few trades which explicitly exclude women. All the female members of a merchant's household would be engaged in some form of economic activity - the housewife herself might spend a good deal of her energies organising other men and women to fulfil the necessary domestic tasks so that she would be free to engage in mercantile activities. Women in smaller scale households might take up one of the entrepreneurial activities which were often associated with women because they were extensions of domestic activity - Margery Kempe who was the daughter of one of Lynn's leading citizens describes how "she now bethought herself a new housewifery" and went in for milling - this was after the failure of her brewing enterprise which she ascribes to God's disapproval of her involvement in such activities: "Then for pure covetousness, and to maintain her pride, she began to brew, and was one of the greatest brewers in the town of N. for 3 years or 4, till she lost much money . . . For, though she had ever such good servants, cunning in brewing, yet it would never succeed with them."

But the degree to which it was considered the duty of the good wife to look after her husband should not be underestimated. 'The Goodman of Paris', a late 14th century text, instructs the wife: 'Wherefore love your husband's person carefully, and I pray you keep him in clean linen, for that is your business, and because the trouble and care of outside affairs lieth with men, so must husbands take heed, and go and come, and journey hither and thither, in rain and wind, in snow and hail, now drenched, now dry, now sweating, now shivering, ill-fed, ill-lodged, ill-warmed and ill-bedded. And naught harmeth him, because he is upheld by the hope that he hath of the care which his wife will take of him on his return, and of the ease, the joys and the pleasures which she will do him, or cause to be done to him, in her presence, to be unshod before a good fire, to have his feet washed and fresh shoes and hose, to be given good food and drink, to be well served and well looked after, well bedded in white sheets and

nightcaps, well covered with good furs, and assuaged with other joys and desports, privities, loves and secrets whereof I am silent. And the next day fresh shirts and garments . . . Wherefore, dear sister, I beseech you thus to bewitch and bewitch again your husband that shall be, and beware of roofless house and of smoky fire, and scold him not, but be unto him gentle and amiable and peacable. Have a care that in winter he have a good fire and smokeless and let him rest well and be well covered between your breasts, and thus be with him . . . And thus shall you preserve and keep your husband from all discomforts and give him all the comforts whereof you can bethink you, and serve him and have him served in your house, and you shall look to him for outside things, for if he be good he will take even more pains and labour therein than you wish, and by doing what I have said, you will cause him ever to miss you and have his heart with you and your loving service and he will shun all other houses, all other women, all other services and households.'



ristocratic women were decorative pawns.

The position of aristocratic women in the 14th century was much more rigidly circumscribed and narrowly defined than that of their lower class sisters and this was paradoxically because they could not be housewives. Their position was much more determined by ideological considerations than by economic ones because their husbands and fathers were wealthy enough to free them from the economic necessity of engaging in domestic activity with all its ramifications. There are cases of widows who were heavily involved with estate management or of queens who were actively involved politically but in general most upper class women were almost entirely without political or juridical rights and they spent their lives under the perpetual wardship of a father a husband or a guardian. They had minimal rights over their own property – it simply made them into suitable marriage alliances.

The lack of freedom of aristocratic women was fundamentally connected to the centrality of private property. It was essential for a lord to defend the property rights of his family against any intrusion. He wanted to be sure that his land would be passed on to his heirs and them alone. A major interest of every feudal landowning family was to extend their property – to make good marriages which would result in this, to buy up whatever they could to consolidate their estates and to increase them by force if the occasion arose. Because property was naturally inherited through the male line and property meant land, men and power, women were inevitably seen as decorative pawns. In a period when conspicuous consumption was becoming an increasingly important symbol of power within the ruling class, to have a leisured lady as a wife followed round by a company of young men who were dying of love for her was one aspect of that consumption. It increased the status of the husband in the eyes of the world.

We can see from the medieval definition of housewife how close a relationship there is between the position of women at work and at home – in pre-capitalist society because there is no split between the two, being a housewife means, being engaged in a whole range of productive activities centred both in domestic activity for private consumption and in domestic activity which would be marketable. There are two sets of considerations at work in defining women's proper work – firstly what it is on the whole thought right and proper for women to do and, secondly, what is – given the circumstances of production at the time – practicable for women to do. These two continuously interact on and constrain one another. It is the interaction of the ideological with the economic – both levels within the same social formation but having a relative autonomy of their own – which are the major factors in the definition of housewife.

The extended activities of the 14th century household were beginning to disappear by the 17th century. The emergence of capitalism led to extensive changes in the organisation and function of the family. The family became far less important in production but at the same time far more important in the creation of the relations of capitalist production – in the production we might say of bourgeois men. Women became considerably less important in the direct creation of surplus value but more important in the reproduction of conditions for labour power – the family had to

become the training ground of rational men. With the development of capitalism comes the separation of capital from labour, the separation of the home from the place of work and the separation of domestic labour and commodity production. With the development of a capitalist mode of production the household is no longer the central unit of production. We are already beginning to discern the family as a centre of consumption.

This was, of course, a very long term change, but the separation of work from home has a vital effect on women since it brings with it a much changed conception of the sexual division of labour and what constitutes women's work. Two of the major functions of the family within capitalism are to act as a centre of consumption and to act as the unit which is responsible for the maintenance and reproduction of labour power. The change, in the family from being the major unit of production in the society does have quite specific effects on the housewife. As more consumer goods and services become available on the market, so there is less need for the household to be a self-sufficient unit – a narrowing down of the conception of domestic activities takes place. The housewife still has direct responsibility for the physical care of her husband and children; with the separation of work and home within the capitalist organised trades comes the much clearer division of labour between the man who goes out to work and the woman who stays at home. In a poor labourer's family the woman would often take on work at home which would, of course, be extremely badly paid; the use of women as outworkers has always been a way of ensuring cheap labour and with little danger of organised resistance.



A woman and a man weeding.

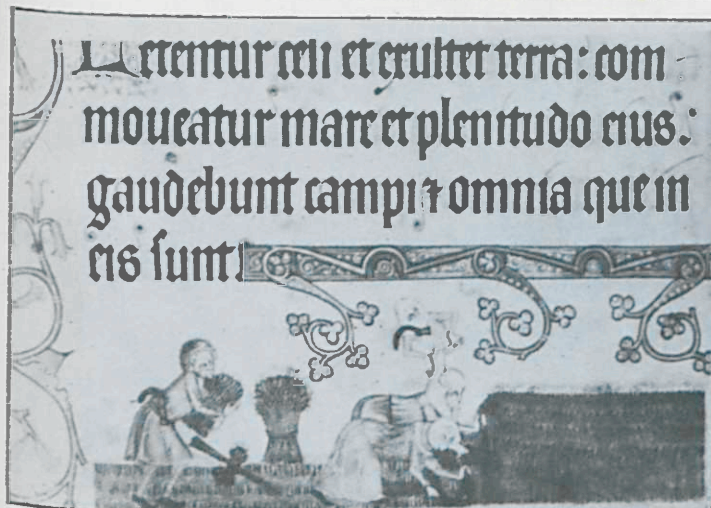
At the same time, the family was becoming much more responsible for the socialisation of the child. The reproduction of labour power requires not only material care but also ideological care. Labour power must both reproduce its skills and its submission to the rules of the established order – in other words, the reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers and the reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression.



y 17th century women are deprived.

In the 14th century, the Church provided the ideology of feudalism – it deified hierarchical relations. With the crisis in the Catholic Church, the Reformation and the development of Puritanism, the Anglican Church no longer combined within itself religious, educational and cultural functions. Consequently the family became much more formative in the socialisation of children. As a prayer in the primer of 1553 put it, 'To have children and servants is thy blessing, O Lord, but not to order them according to thy word deserveth thy dreadful curse.' The woman's role in this was limited. She was her husband's lieutenant and ultimately he made all the decisions of importance in most households.

Meanwhile the wives of the bourgeoisie were becoming less and less



Women cutting corn, with a man gathering it.

involved in domestic and productive activities, and increasingly the desired image was that of the lady of leisure. Housewifery seems to continue to be a valued skill amongst families of middling status where the labour of the woman was still needed. For those who can afford it, however, the ideal is the old, aristocratic one of passivity and dependence – a living demonstration of the wealth of the husband or father. Whereas in the medieval village, at least women had a crucial economic function which was recognised, by the 17th century women are deprived both economically and ideologically as secondary – as people who care for and support others rather than themselves being active in the world. There is less tension between the economic and the ideological spheres than there was in pre-capitalist society because the woman's two main economic functions have become firstly, the organisation of a household which is no longer the central unit of production, and secondly, the provision of a cheap supply of labour.

The more rigid and inflexible sexual division of labour which began to emerge in the 17th century became more institutionalised with the development of industrial capitalism in the 19th century. With the more total separation of work from home and the public from the private, the proper role of women was increasingly seen to be *at home*. The ideal middle class home was a haven from the competition and pressures of the world outside. As Ruskin put it in *Sesame and the Lilies*, 'This is the true nature of home – it is the place of peace, the shelter not only from all injury but from all terror, doubt and division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home; so far as the anxieties out of the outer life penetrate into it, and the inconsistently minded, unknown, unloved, or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband or wife to cross the threshold, it ceases to be home.'



he proper role of woman is to be a Victorian lady.

As the rapidly expanding bourgeoisie extended its range of power and influence – as it established itself not only economically but also politically, so it took on, as the 17th century bourgeoisie had done, the ideas of the ruling class about the proper activities of women, namely a dependent idleness. The mass production of articles formerly made in the home made idleness physically possible for the privileged. The Victorian leisured lady was necessarily bound up with the exploitation of her less fortunate sisters. She relied on lower middle and working class women to nurse and train her children and to do the domestic work associated with her household. Her own involvement would be confined to supervision. At the same time she made use of factory produced goods often worked on by women in the most appalling conditions – her clothes would be made by girls working in sweatshops – long hours for very low pay – she was surrounded by the fruits of exploitation. The ideology of domesticity was far in advance of the real practice – not only did considerable numbers of middle class women have to go out to work but the vast majority of working class women were engaged in work either inside or outside the

home. However, because it was the dominant ideology it did have considerable effects on working class attitudes, despite the differences in situation.

In the 19th century the pattern established in the 17th century with the development of the capitalist mode of production was strengthened and extended with the formation of industrial capitalism. As the division of labour becomes more refined and job specialisation increased so the sexual division of labour rigidifies. The bourgeoisie make their wives into ladies in a position of complete dependence economically and complete subordination ideologically and then use lower middle class and working class women to service their households and produce their textiles.

The emergence of monopoly capitalism has not fundamentally altered the sexual division of labour. Two of the main functions of women with 20th century capitalism could be described as the provision of unpaid labour in the home and the provision of a reserve labour force which is predominantly unskilled and low paid. The role of housewives as consumers has also become very important. The household is now a servicing unit – only productive in the sense that it 'produces' and reproduces labour. As Sheila Rowbotham puts it, 'The housewife maintains the male breadwinner and the children, not by producing goods herself, but by servicing them with goods, produced in the commodity system'. Women buy packaged foods and consumer durables thus cutting down considerably on the time taken in running a house but also providing an ever-expanding market. But, however many gadgets and aids exist, housework can in no sense be abolished without fundamental social change, and women still work extremely long hours in the home.

When we talk of men and women making their own history we must always remind ourselves of the massive institutional and ideological limitations within which women have had to operate. There have always been women who have struggled against the current social definitions both publicly and privately. That struggle has resulted in continual modifications. But it is only when the capitalist economy needs women in large numbers on the labour market that the mystifications of the idealised wife and mother disappear and a new note is introduced. The society can organise creches and canteens and substantially reduce the need for privatised domestic activity as can be clearly seen from the experience of the two world wars. It is for this reason that it is so essential to see the woman as housewife as only one part of the definition of women's work. There is no enduring definition of housewife – the role shifts and changes according to a complex of economic and cultural demands. I hope I have begun to establish the case for a history of women at home as well as in the world of work – if we confined our interest to women in the public sphere we would be accepting the male capitalist, definition of the areas of importance and significance in the society■



Catherine wants to emphasise the fact that her work has only begun. She would be pleased to hear from any other women who are interested. You can write to her care of Spare Rib.

Women Militants:

Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau

Madi Gray came into the Spare Rib office in May to see if we'd be interested in notes she'd taken when she met and talked with women militants in Mozambique and Angola. During a nine month stay in Tanzania, she helped in the setting up of a Dar es Salaam Liberation support group, and a sub-group, the Women's Study Group.

In colonial countries women suffer from a double oppression. Like men they are exploited and oppressed by those who wield the power. They are also taught to be inferior and to consider themselves objects to serve men, the former function of which has long been perverted to serve the invader's needs.

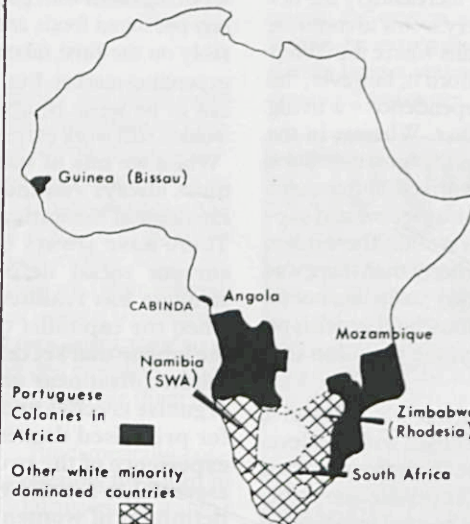
The wars in Portugal's African colonies of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau are more than ten years old. The main liberation movements in these countries, FRELIMO, MPLA and PAIGC, have been forced, as their struggles developed, to evaluate every aspect of life in their countries and realised in the process that they have to do something about the position of women. As conditions in each country differ, so the means to achieve the liberation of women and men differ in each movement.

After elections in the liberated areas of Guinea-Bissau on September 25 last year, an independent state was declared. The rights of all citizens, irrespective of sex, race or creed, are written into the Constitution and the Declaration of State. The People's Army for the Independence of Guinea and the Cape Verdes (PAIGC), which has led the struggle, involves women in the fighting and they hold leadership positions. But unlike the liberation movements in Angola and Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau had no separate women's organization.

The Front for the Liberation of Mozambique, Frelimo, started training its first Women's Detachment in 1967. At first this was primarily a combat unit, with most women participating mainly in defensive actions, but some choosing to attack with men, in ambushes and laying mines. Women were found to be capable of more and more varied work - mobilisation, security and education. And in March 1973, at the first conference of Mozambican Women, it was decided to form a women's organization to take over the political and educational functions, and to concentrate on freeing women from their double oppression.

The oldest women's organization in the Portuguese colonies is OMA, the Organization of Angolan Women. It is the women's arm of the MPLA, The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola, and set up in 1962 to help Angolan women to deal with their problems, mobilise members and train villagers for the struggle to win back their independence.

The tasks in all three countries are enormous. By its nature, guerilla warfare is waged primarily in the countryside. Without the support of the villagers who help to feed and shelter the fighters, a guerrilla war cannot be successful. So



Member of the MPLA in Angola

it is vital to mobilise and train the people in the villages to understand the struggle and to defend themselves.

Everything is brought in from outside. Clo-

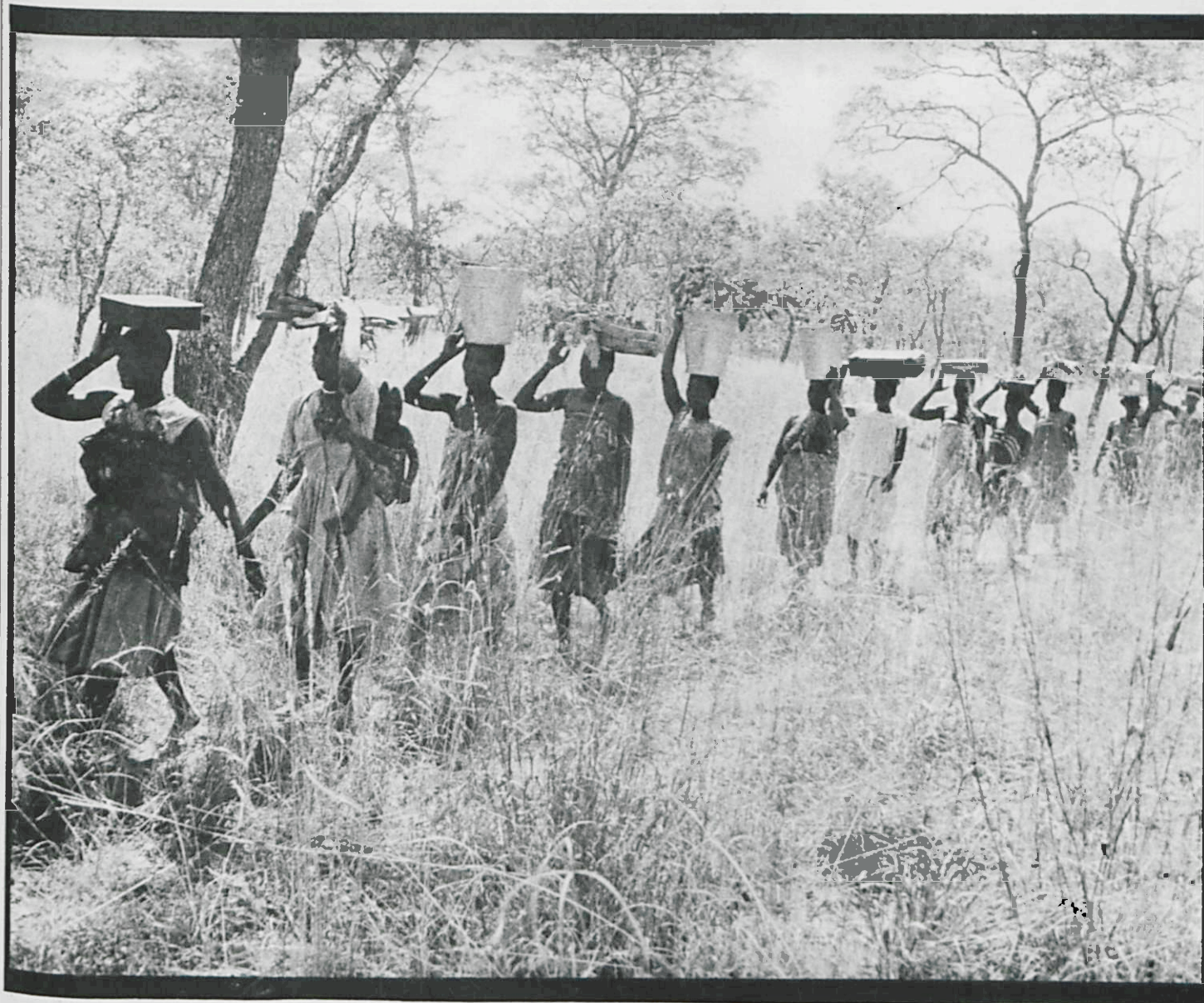
thing, medical supplies, educational material, ammunition, weapons, some food and tools, must be carried, and in the liberated zones most of the transport is still done by people walking, often hundreds of miles, along narrow tracks in difficult terrain, and in all weathers. For us living in tiny Britain, the harshness of life in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau can hardly be imagined.

Guinea-Bissau is a small country, half the size of Portugal. But the Cape Verde Islands, way out in the Atlantic Ocean, are bleak and rocky and it is a battle just to grow enough food. The mainland is tropical forest, crisscrossed by rivers patrolled by Portuguese gunboats; and in many areas the people can cross the rivers only after dark. The Republic of Guinea (Conakry) and Senegal provide safe bases where training camps have been set up, and on the whole transport is less of a problem there than in the other two countries.

Angola and Mozambique are very large, respectively 14 and 8 times the size of Portugal. Both of them have hostile neighbours, SWA in Southern Angola and Rhodesia, Malawi and SA in Mozambique. Tanzania and Zambia provide bases for both FRELIMO and MPLA, and so does Congo-Brazzaville, which borders on the Cabinda enclave of Angola. The further the fighters move from their friendly borders, the more difficult it becomes to supply them. Problems in Mozambique are bad enough, but to reach the Angolan front supplies must travel 3,000 miles right across the African continent from Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.

As the war progresses and as the fighting penetrates ever deeper into the countries, so conditions of struggle change. Both Eastern Angola and Northern Mozambique are relatively sparsely populated, which means the fighters have to carry most of their own food and use precious ammunition to hunt for meat. Where there are villages, the militants participate in cultivation and bring new methods and new crops to the people. But this brings its own problems of defense, and of disguising and hiding the fields. The Portuguese carry out defoliation operations and vicious reprisal raids. For the past year Jesuit priests have been publicising massacres carried out by Portuguese troops. And in Mozambique, where FRELIMO is now threatening vital road and rail links to Malawi and Rhodesia, the direct threat to white-owned plantations has led to white demonstrations against the old regime for not providing them with adequate protection.

It is due largely to the success of the liberation



Moving supplies in free Mozambique

movements in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau that there has been a change of government in Portugal. For the past few years, about half its national budget was spent on the colonial wars, and virtually all its young men were involved in the fighting. The costs became too great, there were no gains. Now the new Portuguese government is doing all it can to win politically where it was losing militarily. It is probably prepared to concede the mainland of Guinea-Bissau if it can hang onto the strategic Cape Verde Islands. In Mozambique and Angola it will try to set up puppet governments. They may be black, white or mixed, even UDI is in the air, it may attempt a partition, clearly it will try to salvage as much as possible. But unless it recognises the movements the people support - PAIGE, FRELIMO, MPLA - as the true representatives of their countries, the 'solutions' will be token and the war will continue.

FRELIMO had a women's organisation in the mid-sixties, which they dissolved after a few years because it was 'non-productive'. A highly trained force of women militants, the Women's Detachment, however represented FRELIMO women at international conferences. At the 1972 Seminar celebrating the 10th anniversary of the All African Women's Conference, these delegates declared, 'We are supposed to talk about the role of women in our struggle. We find it somehow difficult since in our organisation women and men fight and work together, side by side, in every kind of activity.'

A year later, at the first Conference of Mozambican Women in March 1973, it was decided that it was no longer enough to simply incorporate women into the Women's Detachment and other FRELIMO structures. 'There was a psychological factor affecting most comrades which makes it difficult for them to carry out their tasks - an inferiority complex.' And so OMM, the Organisation of Mozambican Women, was established as part of the overall structure of FRELIMO, to reach 'out to a new sector, the women's sector, whose full and adequate participation (had) been neglected up to now'.

Similarly, OMO, the Organisation of Angolan Women, was set up to enable MPLA women to deal with the problems they suffer as women. However, OMA has been going for 12 years. It mobilises and trains women in remote MPLA controlled villages, as well as providing avant garde cadres in the political leadership.

The following extracts are from a taped meeting with OMA women and members of the Darlib Women's Study Group in March 1974.

What are the specific problems of women?

MPLA is struggling against colonialism and imperialism. Women and men are all suffering from the same oppression. But women also have problems stemming from traditional customs, as is true of women in any country. As you in the industrialised countries have racial discrimina-

tion, so you have discrimination against women by men. Although women in Europe are more progressive they are still discriminated against, in jobs, in pay, and in most, including less public, areas of living.

Women face other responsibilities too, like child care. In any society a woman must fight against all the complexes ingrained in her by tradition. OMA is the organisation Angolan women have created to fight these problems.

How do the men feel about it?

Most of the men are in favour of women cooperating in these activities, although not all immediately accept women doing what were previously regarded as exclusively male activities.

Is there a deliberate policy to extend the range of work women do?

One of MPLA'S political tasks has been to increase understanding and education on the fundamental principle of the dignity of work. In the MPLA no tasks are assigned to just one sex. The activities of a woman militant and of a man militant depend on the militancy and abilities of the person concerned.

Of course not everyone accepts this changing of traditional habits immediately but OMA has done a great deal to achieve this purpose, explaining it and educating its militants.

Are changes in women's role being discussed in the villages?

In the liberated areas of Angola the people are either MPLA militants or sympathisers. And within our movement's structures all problems are discussed with the people. ►

Throughout their lives, at different phases of their growth, girls are subject to what is known as 'initiation rites' which, although varying in form from region to region, all have in common the fact that they instill in girls a submissive attitude towards men and teach them that their place in society is a secondary one. During the puberty ceremony, specifically, girls are told that their role henceforth is to produce children and to look after their husband and home, all other tasks being forbidden to them. These initiation rites, which are surrounded by an aura of mystery and religious solemnity, have a very powerful psychological impact and make girls blindly accept what they are taught, traumatising them for the rest of their lives.

Are tribal customs such as initiation rites and bride price changing?

With the evolution of society all these traditions are changing in a progressive way and all the limitations of colonial society are therefore disappearing as women emancipate themselves.

Can you give an example of this?

Girls used to marry around 10 or 12 years, and the brideprice went to the parents. Now parents are faced with a problem: the delay or loss of the dowry. Mothers, who like your mothers tend to be conservative, want their daughters married like they are. In one village the teacher of the village primary school did not want girl pupils to marry young. The matter was taken to the village committee, who brought it to the fortnightly gathering so the whole village could discuss and find a solution to the problem.

Are there women in the leadership of MPLA?

We don't have a woman military leader but we do have women in the political structure. Some are members of the Executive Committee, like Comrade Deolinda, who was killed by the Portuguese while returning from mobilising work. Since 1962 she was a member of the executive of OMA and MPLA, and of the organisation in



The women's detachment of FRELIMO

Kinshasa which was helping refugees from Angola.

How are women involved in the fighting?

At the bases inside Angola are guerillas, women and children. When a base is attacked, the men and the women without children defend it. Women may also carry ammunition on military actions. The women responsible for the children take shelter with them.

At the start of the armed struggle 99% of Angolans were illiterate. So a large proportion of OMA militants must be illiterate. What does OMA do about this?

Wherever there are five OMA militants they must form an OMA branch with a secretary,

treasurer, and so on. And they must organise literacy classes, so schools are generally found where there are a number of OMA members. UNESCO awarded OMA the Nadedja Krupskaya Prize for its work in literacy. We also have teaching cadres and technicians who are working in the DEC, the Department of Education and Culture.

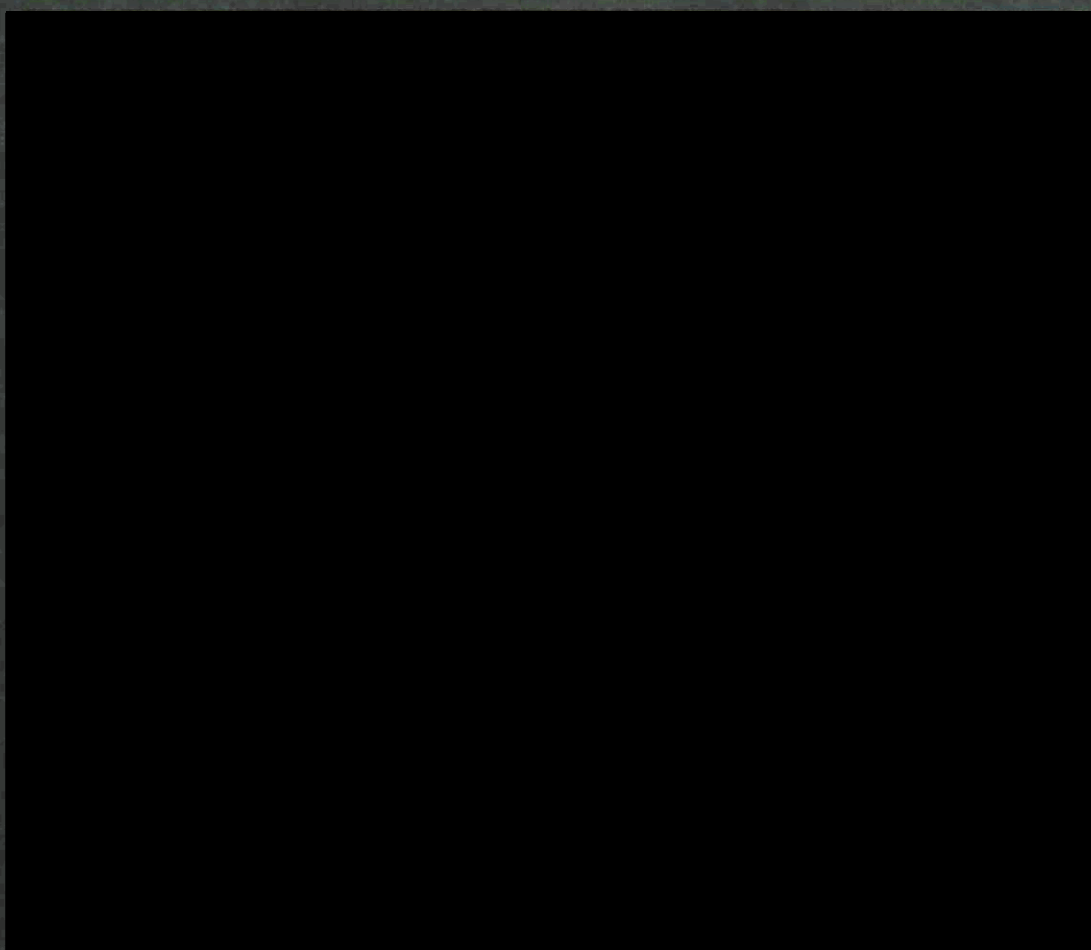
OMA schools offer only the first and second years. Most women and men don't know reading and writing and are at the same level as children. But the teaching methods differ, so adult literacy classes are not combined with schooling for children, but are a parallel activity. Political education goes together with literacy training ■

Women meeting in Angola



NEWS

**“You can’t put
dedication in the bank”**



By the end of May nurses were demonstrating in greater numbers than ever before, and thousands were joining unions for the first time. The Royal College of Nursing had threatened mass resignation of its membership from the NHS unless Barbara Castle set up a pay inquiry within 21 days. The government's offer of £18m for nursing education had been turned down by the Whitley Council staff side, and the Halsbury Committee had been set up to investigate the pay structure in nursing. Token strikes and a ban on non-nursing duties were everywhere. May ended with the growth of action committees incorporating the different unions, along with solidarity action from other trade unionists. Now read on. . . .

May

May 31

COHSE reports that health visitors and district nurses are joining the campaign of industrial action. 4,000 automotive products workers in Leamington hold a one-hour stoppage.

NUPE nurses and ancillaries in Gwent go on token strike in six hospitals, and NUPE nurses and ancillaries at Charing Cross in Fulham demonstrate.

An action group comprising nurses in COHSE, NALGO, NUPE and the RCN forms in Dudley, Worcs.

1000 nurses in the Bristol area march with trade unionists. Trades Council and UCATT (building industry) banners join a NUPE-organised demo in Southampton.

June

June 3

The RCN issues a statement saying it is "gravely concerned that many nurses are being misled by calls to irresponsible industrial action, which could adversely affect not only the service to the patient but also their own position as employees."

COHSE refutes this claim: "No patients in serious or urgent need of treatment or care have been or will be neglected. We have an emergency link with the Department of Health for precisely this reason."

All 800 dockers in Manchester begin a 24-hour strike in support of the nurses. The North-West regional secretary of COHSE says the dockers "volunteered to do this. Our colleagues in the docks depend on nurses when there are accidents and I can only say I am overwhelmed with emotion about it."

There are stoppages, bans on non-nursing duties, working to rule, closure of wards in Manchester, Ashton-under-Lyne, Bolton, Rochdale, Blackpool, and Liverpool.

June 6

4,000 nurses march to Hyde Park for a rally and deliver bundles of petitions with more than 200,000 signatures, carried in an antique wheelchair symbolising 'The state of the Health Service in 1974'. The march was not officially sponsored by any of the health unions - it was organised by hospital action committees around the country. The delegation to Downing Street said there would be a two-month period before further action so as to wait for the findings of the Halsbury Committee.

COHSE organises a two-hour stoppage at the 1,000-bed. Bexley psychiatric hospital, Kent.

June 9

Barbara Castle appeals to nurses' leaders to call off their strike campaign.

At its biennial conference COHSE votes to deregister at once under the Industrial Relations Act and negotiate to rejoin the TUC.

June 11

NUPE members at two hospitals in Redhill, Surrey pass a resolution calling on their union executive to declare all-out strike action if Barbara Castle doesn't immediately increase nurses' pay when the Halsbury Committee reports. The NUPE meeting decides to leaflet factories to win support for the nurses.

Calls for an all-out strike at the COHSE conference fail. The conference decides that health workers are to go on with their action unless the lower-paid nurses get an interim award. This award would be pending the committee's findings, which should come no later than August 31.

June 13

COHSE conference calls on the government to appoint a royal commission to examine the staffing problems of NHS psychiatric hospitals, and carries a motion calling for private practice within the health service to be ended.

June 15

Mike Atkinson, NUPE hospital convenor for the North-East, writes in *Socialist Worker*: "Barbara Castle has said it will take 25 years to end private practice. We've done it in the North East in 25 days. We've done it because the nurses have taken action themselves - supported by other workers in the hospitals. The nurses' advisory committee for the North East area - made up of more than 30 nurses representing hospitals throughout the area - had declared that private patients would not be treated until the nurses' claim was met. Now the committee has announced that private patients will never be treated again."

June 16

NUPE & COHSE nurses organised by Rotherham Action Committee participate in the 100,000-strong Yorkshire miners demonstration in Doncaster. Arthur Scargill, Yorkshire miners president, says: "The 65,000 miners in Yorkshire will be participating in industrial action on

your behalf to ensure you have a decent living wage in 1974."

June 17

Manchester dockers stop work for the day again in support of the nurses.

June 18

Merseyside Nurses Action Group calls for a day of action on July 8. It is demanding a £35 minimum for all health service workers and nationalisation of the drugs industry.

June 20

COHSE action committee announces that nursing members will stop treating new admissions to general hospitals except emergencies, psychiatric admissions including mental patients committed from courts, and private patients from July 1 unless they get an immediate interim pay rise while the Halsbury committee sits. Albert Spanswick (COHSE general secretary) says: "Our action is not aimed at the patients. It is aimed at the secretary of state. She must find ways of dealing with the problem." He says too that nearly 15,000 nurses have joined COHSE in May.

June 21

Barbara Castle appeals to COHSE to call off its industrial action and rejects an interim payment for nurses. She says that any increase arising from the inquiry would be backdated and that nurses would benefit from threshold agreements.

June 25

The British Medical Association and the RCN announce a joint meeting to be held between leaders of doctors, dentists, nurses and midwives to discuss the under-financing of the NHS and the suggestion for a short-term injection of £500m. The RCN says: "Finances have been further exacerbated by the recent cuts and the low percentage of the gross national product devoted to the health service."

60 trade unionists set up a Defend the NHS Committee at a meeting called by the Manchester and District Nurses Action Group, and endorse calls for a day of action on July 8 with a campaign of leafletting factories.

June 28

Barbara Castle announces that Lord Halsbury expects to have his report completed by late summer. "Should it appear in a month's

time that the report is likely to be seriously delayed I will then consider asking Lord Halsbury to make an interim recommendation on the nurses' behalf", she says.

Consultants in Hampshire and Portsmouth are "appalled" at the potential effects of the COHSE ban on psychiatric admissions. Wessex Regional Health Authority says: "as employers we naturally have the interest of staff at heart but the care and safety of the patients must be our prime concern at all times."

Nurses from Whittington Hospital, North London march to Highbury Fields with the support of Islington teachers and local government workers. Islington Trades Council secretary says: "We are here to draw attention to the solidarity that exists among workers in the public services, and to keep their plight in front of the public."

June 29

The 22-member COHSE executive calls off the proposed ban on admissions due to start on July 1 in view of Barbara Castle's statement the previous day. But they point out that industrial action might be reintroduced if nurses are not promised a rise by August 31, and that the ban on domestic and clerical duties, and on working with agency nurses and private patients will continue. Albert Spanswick says that COHSE has "succeeded in persuading the government to do what we know they ought to have done."

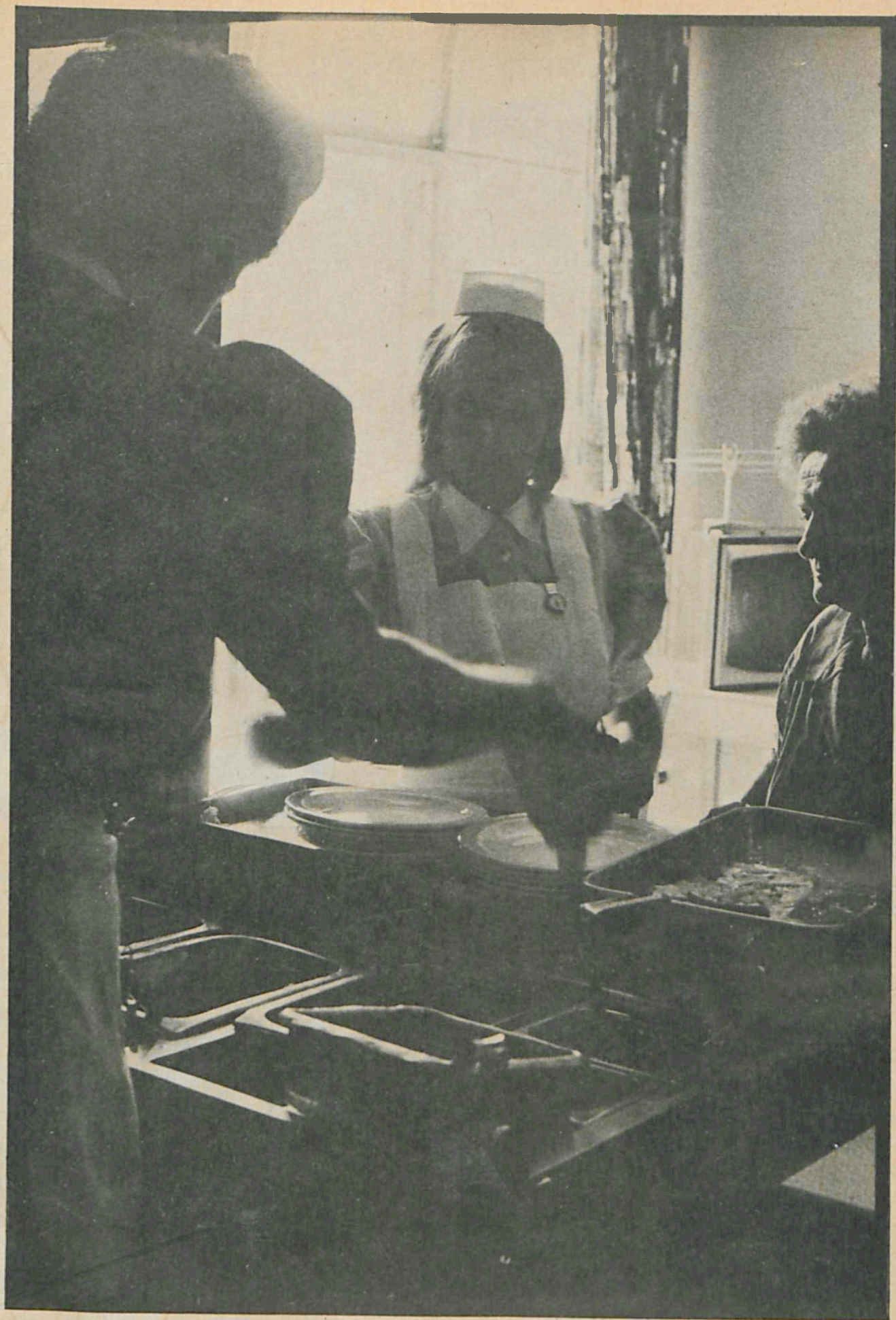
July

July 2

The 1000-member NUPE branch at Charing Cross hospital in Fulham threatens to withdraw all catering and ancillary services to the private wards if the patients aren't moved out by midnight the next day. "There should be one medical service available in this sort of hospital. Private patients can go to private hospitals", says Esther Brookstone, West London NUPE secretary. "The message from my headquarters is 'Good luck to you'."

Consultants at Charing Cross refuse to allow the 27 private patients - who pay their medical fees direct to the consultants - to be moved; management agrees that private patients should be phased out.

NUPE members in the neighbouring St George's Hospital Group organise a meeting to decide whether to take similar action. Alan Ellis, secretary of NUPE in the St George's group, says: "There is strong feeling in London and nationwide at the moment about



David Levin

private patients because of staff shortage and the nurses' action."

NUPE presents a 7,000-word document to the Halsbury committee, stating that nurses need an increase of £15 on their average basic salary and that it would cost £200m to bring nurses pay up to

the level of comparable workers.

COHSE staff at the 1300-bed psychiatric hospital in Maidstone vote to continue their work to rule and overtime ban in support of their pay claim. "The national executive is prepared to accept Barbara Castle's promises, but we are not",

says a spokesman for the workers.

July 3

The Whitley Council staff side puts in a pay claim of up to 38% to the Halsbury committee, and demand a cut in hours from 40 to 38 a week and overtime pay at time and

a half. A first year student nurse's pay would go up to £1,125 and a ward sister's maximum to £2,742. The staff side points out that nearly 95% of nurses earn less than £1 an hour, and that 25% gross less than £18 a week, and says it would welcome a "phasing out of

agency nurses from the Health Service".

At Charing Cross Esther Brookstone says that if management can confirm that "Barbara Castle has written to the hospital authority and told them to close the private wing then we will have won the point we were trying to achieve. Our actions have captured the imagination of hospitals throughout the country."

A Tory MP in Parliament complains that "It is rather shameful to put it mildly that either British or foreign people coming to Britain for medical treatment fully prepared to pay the full price should be evicted by people like female red guards under their beds."

Ancillary staff at 110 hospitals in Yorkshire and Lancashire withdraw laundry and special cooking services from private patients. Nurses are supporting the action in several of the hospitals, NUPE says.

The BMA and RCN meet with Harold Wilson and demand the setting up of an independent inquiry into the finances of the NHS.

July 4

NUPE says the private patients ban will spread to hospitals in Lincoln and Boston; Guy's, the London, St Bart's, Moorfields Eye Hospital in London; the United Manchester, Blackpool, Norfolk, Norwich and Nuneaton hospital groups. NUPE operating theatre nurses and ancil-

lary staff ban cosmetic surgery for private patients at a hospital in Manchester.

COHSE tells its nurse members to ban the admission of all private patients. Nurses in Portsmouth demand that private wings at three hospitals in the city be closed. COHSE nurses in Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Dorset take action over 200 private beds in the area.

The BMA central committee agrees on a virtual work to rule by hospital consultants starting midnight July 8 after the government fails to intervene in the private patient action by union members.

July 6

Leaders of consultants and health service unions come to an agreement with Barbara Castle and call off their threatened boycotts and work to rule due to start on July 8: private beds in the NHS are to stay for the time being but the private practice committee under Dr David Owen is to report later this year instead of in 1975 as originally planned.

North-East divisional officer for NUPE - where members have been operating a ban on private patients for five weeks - says: "The nurses will have the last word, and I think the issue is very open. They have held out against priority for private patients, and there is no guarantee that they will be prepared to give up now."

July 8

Day of Action throughout the trade union movement organised by the Nurses Coordinating Committee. Nurses at the Central Middlesex Hospital march with Brent Trades Council, Wandsworth Trades Council supports a march of nurses from Bolingbroke Hospital, South West London. Teesside nurses have pledges of support from workers in the area, and Middlesbrough AUEW (TASS) Engineers) calls for industrial action.

NURSES TALKING

The calendar was going to be followed by a piece on the development of nursing since the 19th Century, interviews with nurses now, and an attempt to explore the divisions between the various nursing organisations.

But organising the benefits, making a Spare Rib banner, getting the badges and stickers together, has used up a lot of the time we would have spent on researching for that sort of piece thoroughly. So the "nurses talking" on this month's front cover will be talking in the next Spare Rib.

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GRANNY'S THREAT TO THE VIP PATIENTS

Daily Mirror front page headline, July 3. How many men with grandchildren would be described like this?

ECONOMICS

What is the social contract?

At the end of June the General Council of the TUC announced its recommendations to unions on pay for the period following the end of Phase 3 Statutory Wage Control in the autumn. They ask unions to accept that the scope for rises in living standards at present is limited and to give priority therefore to compensating members merely for loss in income due to inflation, with the exception that special consideration should be given to the low paid and to women's pay. Next month we will look specifically at what has been happening to women's pay. Here we consider why and to what effect the TUC leadership has made this particular bargain with the Labour Government.

The TUC in its guidelines argues that the Labour Government has initiated policies which provide a basis both for moderating inflation and for increasing living standards in the future. In the light of this they advise unions to concentrate on arranging threshold agreements or other negotiated methods of compensating workers for cost of living rises. They also favour efficiency deals as means to higher pay, failing to point out the possible consequence of these for reduced employment at a time of rising unemployment.

There have been two themes in the conservative press which provide a background to this development. Firstly the initial months of Labour Government have been depicted as a period of surrender to the demands of the trade unions. Let us look at what the Labour Government has in fact offered in its social contract:

(1) It has promised to remove the effects of the Tory Industrial Relations Act by introducing its own Trade Union and Labour Relations Bill due to be enacted by mid-July.

(2) It instituted a rent freeze until December 1974 after which rents will be allowed to rise again.

(3) It is maintaining price control but with a guarantee that profit margins will be maintained.

(4) It raised pensions and social security benefits financing these through higher employers' national insurance contributions which can be passed on in higher prices.

(5) It introduced subsidies on bread and milk which were more than offset by increased taxes on drink, tobacco, petrol and confectionery. In addition it sanctioned higher prices for steel, electricity, coal, rail and post office.

The overall effect of the last two sets of measures was estimated at the time of the budget to add about 3% to the annual rate of inflation by the end of this year. In addition it is clear that the redistributive measures the Government has taken represent redistribution within the working class only, in favour of the very poorest - who gain, proportionately, from the food subsidies - and of those on pensions and social security. The ending of the Industrial Relations Act is the single most striking concession to the unions but its significance is not as great as might

appear given that the Tories have also now accepted its abolition having realised its ineffectiveness. Overall Labour's measures do very little either to meet the current needs of working people or to reduce the rate of inflation; their ability to bring about increases in living standards at some point in the future is highly doubtful, and contingent on the decisions taken independently by business and the city in the coming period.

The second theme that has been recurrent in discussion on the economy in recent weeks is that of the dangers involved in unions continuing to push for threshold agreements. The director of the Engineering Employers' Federation complained recently that it was impossible for many of their companies to concede threshold agreements which could well be worth £4 by November given current rates of inflation, since this would lead to bankruptcy or loss of export markets. Since threshold agreements at present allowed under Phase 3 do not even fully compensate workers for cost of living rises because they allow gross wages rather than net wages to keep pace roughly with inflation, unions' right even to maintain

living standards is doubly under attack.

The Labour Government cannot in this time of crisis afford to make really meaningful concessions to the trade unions as a whole because it accepts the role of the profit incentive as the basic stimulus to investment and employment and therefore is committed to maintaining profits. It is hardly surprising therefore that the day after the TUC published its guidelines on pay the Government indicated its intention to end controls on dividend payments to shareholders. The TUC leaders in accepting the social contract are therefore inevitably brought into conflict with union members, as is becoming obvious in the current round of union national conferences. The TUC can neither claim that the Labour Government has the policies which are able to achieve a more just society, nor can it guarantee that the current sacrifices working people would be making if they accept its recommendations would be followed by steady improvements in living standards in the future.

Jean Gardiner

glossary

Threshold agreements: Agreements by employers to pay workers a certain increase in gross pay automatically in response to a specified rise in the cost of living. Under Phase 3 workers are entitled to attempt to negotiate rises of 40p (about 1% of average male manual workers' gross weekly earnings) per week for every one percentage point by which the rise in the cost of living since last October exceeds

6%. Since so far there has been a rise of 11.3% the 8 million workers who have so far been able to conclude these agreements have been entitled to an extra £2 above the basic Phase 3 pay limits. Because workers have to pay over a third of any increase in taxes the net increase in pay deriving from threshold agreements is insufficient to fully compensate for inflation.

Efficiency deals: wage agreements within plants which involve acceptance by workers of changes in the organisation of

production such that less labour is required per unit of production. Such deals therefore imply either a reduction in the workforce or a smaller increase in its size.

Subsidies: payments by the government out of its tax revenue to producers of (here) bread and milk enabling them to recover increased costs without raising the market price.

Redistribution: state intervention through taxation, social benefits and subsidies to reallocate income between people. Studies of

the functioning of the welfare state indicate that reallocation takes place mostly from wage earners to non-wage earners and from higher paid wage earners to lower paid wage earners.

Engineering Employers' Federation: one of the most powerful of a series of large organisations representing the interests of specific industries' employers. The EEF represents 5,200 companies.

Jean Gardiner

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Anybody who enters a bookshop today is soon made aware of a fast expanding section of the book market – children's books and particularly picture books. Also growing, but more slowly and less noticeable is the work of groups and individuals looking at the political content of these children's books and particularly at their sexist, racist and class bias.

A few of these groups have been active for some time now, but it is only recently that an attempt was made to bring some of the people working in this field together, to compare notes and to plan possible joint action. The following groups were represented at a meeting in London on June 17th:

CISSY

(Campaign to Impede Sex Stereotyping the Young), c/o Helen Petit 24 Cressida Road, N.19. tel: 01 272 9784. This group used to be known as the Women's Children's Book Group and the Children's Literature Study Campaign; it has been going since Autumn 1971.

The group produced "Goodbye Dolly", the children's books issue of 'SHREW', vol 5, no. 4, 13p including postage from the above address. As a result of this, they were invited at the end of March to talk to the Children's Book Circle, a publishers' organisation of children's book editors. Their attack on the sexist content of most children's books got a mixed reception, but a record number of people did turn up to listen. The group is now preparing a transcript of this meeting. CISSY is a women's group and is open to new members.

Leeds Womens Liberation Literature Collective

c/o Anne Geraghty, 15 Broomfield Crescent, Leeds 6, Yorks. (tel: 0532 756929). This group has been going since 1972 and produces an occasional Newsletter on non-sexist children's books; this relies on contributions from its readers and subscribers. Newsletter no. 8 is now in preparation. Back issues

and a list of recommended books are still available; send a contribution to cover costs, (e.g. 50p for four Newsletters).

Some of the women in this group are also involved in *Feminist Books* (P.O. Box H.P.5, Leeds LS6 1N). This is a new publishing house for women writers which also plans to publish non-sexist children's books. They welcome scripts.

Children's Books Study Group

c/o Jill Pinkerton, 42 Kynaston Road, N.16 (tel: 01 249 1652). This group was formed in September 1973 and is a closed collective of men and women looking at the politics of children's books, and in particular at their class bias, including racism and sexism. At the moment the group is looking at how the family is portrayed in children's picture books and working on criteria for assessing children's books. The Study Group plan to publish their findings in a critical pamphlet, including reviews of well considered authors' and illustrators' work.

Children Rights Workshop Book Project

c/o 73 Balfour Street, London, S.E.17 (01 703 7217). The Project is working on a) a card index of critical material (books, pamphlets and articles) on children's literature. b) an

expanded version of the Project's 'Sexist stereotypes in children's books: a list of principal references and contacts' first published in March 1974 (still available, send 5p including postage.); the new version to cover critical writings on racist and class bias in children's books, as well as sexism. c) an interim list of recommended children's picture books; this list to serve as an introductory guide to easily available books (in preparation); d) some Project members are writing children's picture books together. The Book Project is open to new members, women and men, and its Statement, which appeared in April 1974 is available; send s.a.e.

Women's Education Collective

c/o Women's Liberation Workshop, 38 Earlham St, London W.C.2 (01 836 6081). This group picketed the London Head Teachers Association (L.H.T.A.) Exhibition of Books for Schools at Central Hall Westminster in March this year and handed out leaflets on sexism in children's books. They are now looking at their position as women teachers in schools and in the teachers unions. The group is open to women.

Some members of this group are also members of: **The Women's Education Collective Children's Book Group**

c/o Ann Heyno, Flat 3, Lady Margaret Road, N.W.5. (tel: 01 267 4966). The Group has had three meetings so far and is writing a non-sexist reading scheme, free from class bias. The scheme will be aimed at Primary school children and Secondary school non-readers. Group members write individually then discuss and criticise collectively. Committed women may apply to join them; the Group needs an illustrator.

Also looking at children's books as well as other teaching

materials is a small group c/o Sarita Cordell, 139 Hemingford Road, London N.1. (tel: 01 6071724). This women's group was formed as a result of the Institute of Education Conference on sex role stereotyping in March this year. They are planning a day or weekend exhibition for early October 1974 on feminist teaching resources, including films, slides and books. . . They welcome suggestions for suitable material.

Librarians for Social Change Children's Group

c/o John Vincent, 7 Dellcott Close, Welwyn Garden City, Herts. (tel: 01 761 0901). The Group will soon be bringing out a complete issue of the magazine 'Librarians for Social Change' on children's books (available from 67 Vere Road, Brighton Sussex, 15p an issue). The Group is open to women and men.

Also present at the meeting were writers and illustrators already working on their own children's books.

The main decisions of the meeting were to send a joint letter to publishers as a first step in a growing campaign to rid children's books of their narrow and distorted version of reality. A similar approach will be made to chief librarians in the London area. The Groups and individuals agreed to meet again in the Autumn. A small group was set up to prepare a 'presence' at a forthcoming children's books conference of established writers and illustrators.

For too long now, publishers, booksellers, writers and illustrators and critics have had it all their own way. Books are not neutral nor are they harmless. In our different groups and together, we are determined to campaign for books that do not give children a partial and reactionary view of the world. ■

by members of Children's Books Study Group & Children's Rights Workshop.

Dolours and Marian Price ended their 200-day hunger strike at the beginning of June, when an agreement was reached with Home Secretary Roy Jenkins that a date for their transfer to jail in Northern Ireland would be given later this year.

Noreen Taylor talked with Clare Price, the eldest sister, in Belfast in April. A combination of uncertainty over the sisters' lives and the length of our copydates means we haven't printed the interview until now.

But remember that Dolours and Marian Price are still women in a men's prison - Brixton. The psychological and physical effects of force-feeding are with them still. Thus Clare's account of their days in Brixton has relevance now.

There is relevance for us too in the more general points Clare makes about the situation of women in the Church and in politics in Ireland now.

"I don't think that Northern Irish women ever were subservient. At all the rallies it's mostly women who do the talking. Most of them are ordinary housewives..."

Women, Politics and the Church

When did you and your sisters first become politically involved?

I suppose 1968-69 when we first joined People's Democracy. Dolours and I were at the first Civil Rights meeting in Belfast. Marian was too young at the time. But once P.D. started then we really became interested.

We were brought up in Republicanism, so I dare say we had a better start than most people. Though at the start of '68 Republicanism didn't come into it at all. Then, all we were asking for was one-man, one-vote. That's what we went into the streets for, and that's how we were beaten off the streets. After the Loyalist extremists moved down and burnt out the Lower Falls, it seemed to us that it was no longer good enough to sit down in the middle of the road and get shot at by the 'B' Specials.

What about the role of women in the North?

I suppose the troubles have helped. But I don't think Northern Irish women ever were subservient. At all the rallies and protests it's mostly women who do the talking. Most of them are ordinary housewives, but they have enough self-confidence to get up on a platform.

How much attention do women pay to the Catholic Church in the North?

I don't think young people in the North now listen to what the parish priest has to say. I suppose some of the priests are genuinely good people, but most of them are so aloof. They can make speeches condemning violence from the pulpit, because they're not involved with the people. You would find very few young people here going to Mass every Sunday. Whereas

when I was a child it was thought a great sin not to go. As far as matters like contraception go, I think women use their own conscience as a guide.

If you said that to other women in Northern Ireland would they be shocked?

Not people of my own age. There are some older people who would be. But they are the people whom we would say "eat the altar rails". But in recent years even women of 50 and 60 have become very disillusioned.

The Family

How are you and your family coping with your sisters' prison sentences?

I can't sleep at night for thinking about them. I've gotten to the stage sometimes when I give up hope. But when we visit Dolours and Marian it's them that keep us going, instead of the other way round. I really feel for my mother, she's nearly demented. But she would never ask them to give up their hunger strike.

But I couldn't live if I thought Dolours and Marian would really serve those sentences. When the situation here is stabilised, I'm sure they will be released. That's the way it has always been before. There are 2,000 political prisoners in the North - young kids of 17 or 18 - all serving life sentences. You couldn't take it, if you thought they would be in that long.

Dolours and Marian

What are your sisters' conditions like in Brixton?

They're tired all the time. They're locked up 21 hours a day. It used to be 23, but now they've decided to give them some exercise in the mornings and afternoons.

Anyone who had known them before, wouldn't now. Dolours has bald patches, her hair is falling out and her back teeth are loosening. The dentist in Brixton said it was the gag.

Of the two, we are more worried about Marian. With her, the tube gets blocked and sometimes she has to be force fed twice a day. Dolours is a terrible yellow colour. Marian doesn't look as bad, although it's only the excitement that flushes her face. Neither of them has had a period since last November.

They say they spend most of their time conditioning their minds to being force fed. They are awakened at 7am and fed at 10.30. One is brought into the room while the other waits outside. They each say the most terrifying thing of all is listening to the other being force fed. Dolours has now lost her taste buds, she doesn't even know when the feed is sour or not.

The feed is a mixture of Complan, eggs, and orange juice. Altogether they receive about 2,000 calories a day, which is ridiculous considering the required amount for a building worker is 1,500 a day.

Has the situation affected them mentally?

Well, they both say they've known the extreme joy of life, and now they're facing the extreme horror. They get depressed...

How do they spend their time?

Well, they read a lot. Eamonn McCann has just sent them his book ("War and an Irish Town" - about Derry). Dolours has her guitar, and they both write fantastic letters. They applied for an Open University course, but the reply was that Brixton doesn't have the right facilities.

"It's with you all the time"

Do you think you would show the same strength in that situation?

It's hard to say. The way I feel now, it's that I'd like to change places with both of them. When we're here in Belfast knowing what they're going through over there... it never leaves your mind. ... it's with you all the time, especially at 10.30 every morning.

How do you and your family afford the trips to England?

We can't, to be honest. If my aunt hadn't come over from the States and helped out, I don't know what we would have done. Roy Jenkins said when he got into power, he'd see my mother got an air ticket. When my father went down to collect it, he was told he could have the boat fare only, and put the rest to it.

My mother suffers with a chest complaint, and after the boat trip she's in bed for a week.

Are your sisters regarded as local heroines?

Oh! Very much. Even in the South, which I think is normally so complacent, you'll see on walls everywhere, 'Release the Price sisters'.

A lot of people would say your sisters got what they deserved, when they put the lives of several hundred people in jeopardy.

Well, surely after 158 days of forced feeding, they've had their pound of flesh. Double life sentences for blowing up property, that's what it was. I don't see how anyone with human feelings could condone the daily brutality that's being done to them, as well as Hugh Feeney and Gerard Kelly. I detest the people who are doing it, but even more so the people who are sanctioning it.

A woman is like a drop of rain.
No one knows whether it will fall into a palace,
or on the mud of the ricefields.

VIETNAMESE PROVERB

"Women and Revolution in Indochina" is a slide show based upon material gathered by Jane Fonda during her visit to North Vietnam in 1972, with a commentary written by the Women in Indochina Study Group. It was first shown during the Women and Socialism Conference in London in September 1973, and has since been seen by women's groups and socialist groups around the country.



Women in Indochina slideshow

The Vietnamese have been fighting for their freedom since World War Two. First against the French and then against the United States, who still continue to support a violently repressive government in the South with money and weapons, even after a peace treaty has been signed. By mid-1973 The US had spent 250,000 million dollars and dropped more than twice the amount of bombs dropped by both sides during the whole of the second world war. In addition the US developed weapons for use against undefended civilians - like napalm, anti-personnel bombs, and defoliants - in order to drive them into areas controlled by the US. Yet the Vietnamese, living in a desperately poor and technologically underdeveloped country, have managed to continue their resistance and bring the giant to his knees.

Many of our friends in the women's movement regard the Women in Indochina Study Group with suspicion. "You are avoiding your own problems", they say. "You don't live in Indochina, you'd do better to examine your own situation here in England."

Obviously this group gives us something for ourselves or we wouldn't be doing it, but first to outline its history and intentions: when it was formed, in December 72, some of us had been active in politics for a long time, and this was our first women's group; some had been in women's groups for several years and had been radicalised by the women's movement, and some had been active in both.

The intentions of the group were basically these: to see what parallels existed between the situation of women in Indochina and our own. To see in what way the war has forced changes in the position of women from the patriarchal and hierarchical structure that used to exist. To examine the restructuring of society that has taken place in the liberated areas, and see what relevance it has for our own society. To try to analyse the level of women's consciousness of their specific oppression as women, and see what likelihood there is of gains made during the war being retained in time of peace. The position of women usually improves during a war only to sink right back again as soon as the war is over. Remember what happened in England during World War Two, and what is happening in Ireland now. War changes women's lives but not necessarily their consciousness.

Another task we set ourselves was through discussions, the slideshow, articles, etc, to try to raise the feminist consciousness of women in political groups in this country, and also to give an international dimension to the women's movement here.

Heroines of the Revolution

None of us knew much about Indochina to begin with. We discovered that there was very little literature that related to the specific experience of women except along the lines of:

"Women of South Vietnam take their part in the struggle for the liberation of their homeland", and "North Vietnamese schoolgirls building roads and carrying ammunition". Heroines of the revolution. There is plenty of information about the appalling suffering of women bombed, napalmed, herded into refugee camps, tortured and imprisoned and forced into prostitution, but very little about how they relate to men in guerrilla units - how authority and technical expertise is structured.

For instance, whether jobs that have become women's work in the North, due to shortage of manpower (like working in steelworks in this country in World War 2), have changed the underlying structure of the relationships between men and women. Whether the experience of prostitution in the South has changed the attitude of the "traditionally chaste and modest" Vietnamese women - who were punished for adultery by being trampled to death by elephants - to their own sexuality.

As feminists we can identify in several ways with the struggle of the Vietnamese women. We, like they, are becoming new people through stretching our capacities, learning new skills, gaining experience of action leading to changes in our own lives. But what makes their situation so much more ambivalent than our own is that they are fighting alongside their men against US imperialism. Because of the desperate situation of Vietnamese women and men, fighting for the very existence of their country, the women can easily be seen - and see themselves - in the traditional woman's role of sacrificial victim or martyr. If their awareness of their own position remains at this level then is it not likely that they will sink back into traditional roles when sacrifice for their country is no longer demanded of them?

The creature of folk song

What is particularly interesting for us is the way in which social organisation in the North and in the liberated areas in the South has made conscious efforts to redress the balance in favour of women. A traditional Vietnamese folk song describes a woman as "a

poor stork wading in the mud of the river; weeping she accompanies her husband, a load of rice upon her shoulders". She used to be a creature with virtually no rights at all, owing obedience throughout her life to a man, first to her father, then her husband, and then her eldest son. Ho Chi Minh, the North Vietnamese leader, realised that "women make up half society. If women are not liberated then society is not free".

In the North now, the Women's Union - with four million members - is responsible for the education of women, and for seeing that the laws concerning women are implemented. It encourages women to push for their rights at home, and to overcome their feelings of inferiority. It believes that housework, cooking and responsibility for the children should be shared by men and women.

Change has not been easy, and the Women's Union admits that the struggle for complete emancipation is a continuing one. But now there is a concentrated attempt to rectify centuries of social imbalance. If a man and a woman of equal talent apply for one place in a school, for example, then the woman must be admitted. And to ensure the promotion of women in industry there are minimum leadership quotas: when a factory has a majority of women workers the manager of the factory must be a woman. Today women make up over one-third of the popularly elected National Assembly, and

five of the Vice-Ministers in the North Vietnamese government are women.

The roots of violence and the damage within ourselves

But there is another level on which the study of this particular war relates very deeply to the women's movement: not only the way in which it affects the women who are the victims of it, but the way in which it has become a sort of theatre for the acting out of certain patterns of behaviour in Western society.

One of the members of the group, an American, sees the whole US war machine as a feminist problem. The Pentagon, the whole military-industrial complex, a 110% male organisation, dedicated to male ideals, the patriarchal big Daddy with his big stick/prick. This is what we are fighting everywhere, and in the Vietnam war we have a perfect symbolic expression of the fight.

A lot of this was brought out by women talking with G.I.'s during the Winter Soldier Investigation, which was a very courageous attempt by some Vietnam veterans to show the American people what was going on in the war by confessing to crimes that they themselves had committed against Vietnamese civilians. They described the way in which G.I.'s are trained to regard yellow people as 'gooks', non-human, yellow women as expendable sexual objects, and are trained to

vent their anger, hatred and fear on these objects.

'A woman was shot by a sniper. When we got up to her she was asking for water, and the lieutenant said to kill her, so they ripped off her clothes. They stabbed her in both breasts and shoved an entrenching tool up her vagina. She was still asking for water. . . and then she was shot.'

The roots of this violence come from deep within our culture and take their toll on women all over the world, including ourselves.

Women in Indochina Study Group



Women in Indochina slideshow



Women in Indochina slideshow

The images of gook and sexual object have a reverberating area of damage. They are internalised by the women and the colonised people so that many South Vietnamese prostitutes and society women, for instance, undergo costly plastic surgery operations to enlarge their breasts and change the shape of their eyes, in order to raise their price. "These women, physically changing the shape of their bodies to conform to a foreign stereotype, are extreme examples of the conditioning process which affects us all."

The slideshow "Women and Revolution in Indochina" can be obtained from 49 Florence Road, London N4.

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■ **SHREW MAGAZINE**, written and designed by the Ealing and Fulham groups of the Women's Liberation Workshop. Now available at 15p from your newsagent or direct from the Women's Liberation Workshop, 38 Earlham St, London WC2.

■ **AT LAST!** An International Directory/Bar and Club Guide especially for Gay Women. 700 Listings/20 Countries - including USA and Canada. Send £2.00 only or order C.O.D. from The Girls Guide, 70 Pembroke Road, London W8. No Callers) Also now on sale in London at: Compendium, 240 Camden High St, NW1, Sterling's Bookstore, 57 St Martins Lane, WC2 and The Public House, 21 Little Preston St, in Brighton.

■ **WOMEN'S LIBERATION LITERATURE** or any books. Send SAE for free booklist to H Rutovitz, 31 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh.

■ **WOMEN PSYCHOTHERAPIST** (Jungian) now has vacancies. Highgate area. Tel: 01-348 5593

■ **NEW DESIGN W.L. BADGE** 14p (incl postage)

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■ **THE GIRLS' GUIDE** - which no Gay Woman should ever be without - is now available in London at: 'Compendium' 240 Camden High St, 'Modern Books' 283 Camden High St, and through the Gay News Mail Order Service. Also: Brighton - 'The Public House Bookstore' 21 Little Preston St.

■ **SAPPHO MAGAZINE**. Published by homosexual women for all women. Monthly 40p inc. postage BCM/PETREL, London WC1V 6XX. Meeting first Monday each month. Upstairs Room. 7.30 pm Euston Tavern, Judd St/Euston Rd..

■ **WOMEN'S BOOKS**, wide range available from 11 Waverley Rd., Bristol 6.

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■ **WOMEN'S ART CENTRE**. South London Women's, 14 Radnor Terrace, SW8. 01-622 8495. If you're interested in joining please phone or come (closed on Thursday and Friday) between 1pm and 5pm.

■ **WOMEN'S LIBERATION** Workshop, 38 Earlham St, London WC1. Huge range of books now available, send sae for list.

■ **Non-chauvinist painters** 01-727-7101.

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The Ones That Got Away

Zoe Fairbairns sifts the media

The organised male working class has been giving its usual support to its sisters this month: a COHSE shop steward was heard explaining on Capital Radio that current rates of nurses' pay were "all right for women" but insufficient for men, whose new-found militancy was the driving force behind the nurses' strikes; Charles Donnet, national officer of the GMWU described militant nurses as "disgusting... screeching at each other like tarts fighting over the last of the big spenders" (Daily Express, June 5); and in Birmingham, 18 men claimed that they had been unfairly dismissed when they refused to do work normally done by women. Their TGWU representative claimed that they should not have been put on the job, which was "tedious, monotonous - and involved hard work." It was also low-paid, and men were normally only put on it as a punishment for misdemeanours.

People having thoughts on motherhood as a job recently include Judge George Baker who awarded a divorced woman only a one-twelfth share in the family home because she had walked out on her husband and four children after 15 years and had thus "left her job unfinished"; and Ms Hazel Stroud, who told a conference of Tory women at Solihull that childless women should be paid a state bounty for their contribution to population control (The Times, June 6.)

The Company Pensions Information Centre has discovered from a Gallup Poll that less than half of British wives know what their husbands earn. The CPIC is distressed at this "lack of interest" among wives. (Daily Telegraph, May 30.) And Ted Heath castigated the government on May 20 for the attitude to women shown by its silence with regard to the future of the Tory tax-credit scheme, "the most imaginative scheme ever produced for the benefit of women," (Times, May 21,) thus neatly burying the true history of one aspect of that scheme, namely

the Tory plan to pay family allowances to husbands, a plan which only the united insistence of women of all classes and parties forced them to abandon.

The trial of Mary Oakley, for not being a virgin, has ended. Whoops, sorry, got that wrong; it was Robert Boltoph who was on trial, and found guilty, of raping her. Ms Oakley wasn't on trial at all. An easy mistake to make, though, if one has read the newspaper reports of the trial: the discussion of her sex-life, the discussions of whether she did or did not enjoy the rape, of whether she was or was not on the pill (and therefore 'promiscuous'), of whether she was or was not unattractive enough to need to seduce a man, of whether she could or could not have got an abortion. The papers which had slaveringly reported the trial became suddenly terribly concerned about Ms Oakley's "ordeal" once sentence had been passed; but Home Office Minister of State rejected the proposal that rape victims should be allowed to keep their names secret on the grounds that "Women sometimes complain in cases where it's not justified... if it ever did become the case that there was a tendency for women not to

report rape it might be a different matter." (London Evening Standard, June 18.) And, by way of epilogue, a day later, the Daily Express reported that a young Royal Marine, John Smillie, had been given a suspended 18-month sentence for rape, and set free. One of the reasons for such leniency, said the judge, was that after the rape, Smillie "started crying and showed remorse".

In brief: the Observer of June 9 opened an article on Tupperware parties with the sentiment "Most men, and an admirable number of women, will run a mile from a hen party" ... the Express reported on June 14 that Barbara Castle is unlikely to have her wish granted that she continue to be known as Barbara Castle, since certain Tory MPs have decided to call her Lady Castle, which is what the Express declares is her "real name, since her husband Ted was ennobled recently." And finally, Cardiff junior Chamber of Commerce is having trouble organising a beauty contest because local women are boycotting it (Western Mail, June 7) because they are "shy".



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events

September 21st and 22nd. Conference on the theoretical problems and tactics of women's liberation as a mass movement.

Registration £1, students and claimants 50p. For further information contact Jill Lampert, 26 Longsdale Road, Harborne, Birmingham. Tel: 021-427-7433. Cheques, etc., to be made payable to Women and Socialism Conference.

Women's printing press

An evening course in small offset litho will be held at Camberwell School of Arts and crafts, Peckham, S.E.5, starting September 1974. The course will meet one evening a week for a year. The cost is £2. A minimum of 8 students is needed so that the course will take place. The course will be tailored to meet the students' requirements. At the end of the year students should have a working knowledge of platemaking and printing on offset presses. Seriously interested women please phone Barbara at 340-3920.

1975: The United Nations has proclaimed 1975 International Women's Year

Cynical timing, women here may feel, in view of the supposed implementation by then of that all time non-starter, the Equal Pay Act. Do your own individual and collective thing; for any more ideas for action, celebration and provocation, send for the broadsheet produced by Virginia Novanna, 12, St Edmund's Court, St Edmund's Terrace, London NW8.

contacts

Haringay Women's Aid is shortly to open a house for battered women, and needs donations of bedding, children's toys and clothes, as well as women to help run the centre in its initial stages. Anyone living in Hornsey, Tottenham or Muswell Hill areas who is willing to help even for an afternoon or an evening, please ring Lynda at 340-9570.

Books can be obtained from the following centres, among others:

Women's Centre, 11, Waverly Rd, Bristol, 6; Falling Wall Press, 79, Richmond Rd, Montpellier, Bristol BS6 5EP; Sisterhood Books, 22 Gt Windmill St, London W.1. London W.L. Workshop, 38 Earham St, London, W.C.2.

Women's groups

A list of current groups can be obtained from the W.L. Workshop, 38 Earham St, London, WC2. It includes information on local groups, study groups, socialist groups, action and campaign groups, women's aid groups and women's centres. Please quote newsletter 48 of June 19th and help to make the list really up-to-date by sending in any necessary corrections and additions.

The Mental Patients Union has been in existence since 1973, campaigning mainly for the abolition of compulsory hospitalization. A list of local groups and other information can be obtained from MPU, 37 Mayola Rd, Clapton, London E.5.

exhibitions

Londoners at home.

An exhibition of photographs by the American photographer, Nancy Hellebrand. The pictures are of what have often been dismissed as the ordinary lives of ordinary women at home; but this exhibition by a woman, about women, for women, is certainly not ordinary. At the National Portrait Gallery from September 19th to November 3rd.

The City Art Projects of the Southern Arts Association takes place this year in Portsmouth and Southsea from August 1973 to January 1975. Emma Park and Philippa Ecobichon are among the artists participating. For more details contact Peter Ibsen, City Art Project, Southern Arts Association, South Side Offices, Law Courts, Winchester, Hants. Tel: Winchester 69422.

The Women Painters' Collective meets regularly on Saturdays between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. It plans to organize collective quarterly exhibitions and eventually to raise funds for needy women artists. Interested women who want to paint / write / draw / crochet / embroider / sew / coordinate a creche, etc., should write to the collective at the South London Women's Centre, 14 Radnor Terrace, London, SW8. Tel: 01-622-8495.

publications

Feminist Books.

The following information has been sent to us by Feminist Books: Since its tentative beginnings in 1968, the Women's Movement has become a strong and urgent force, challenging almost every aspect of our culture and exposing the sexism which underpins the whole society. With experience and shared knowledge, women have been learning how best to combat all the pressures which subject them to economic, social and psychological inferiority. The Movement has found effective ways of sharing consciousness, information and ideas through journals, pamphlets, periodicals and Conference papers. In addition, many groups produce their own community papers and reports of local activities. And in all this, women are discovering and using their own resources, learning about editorial control, printing processes and distribution. But there are drawbacks. These activities are taking place outside of the context of our working lives, and our publications are not reaching a sufficiently wide audience. Though women have the skills, we have not had the necessary means to

set up a fulltime independent women's publishing house, so women who have written books rather than articles and pamphlets have been forced back onto the male dominated publishing world with all that that entails - relinquishing of vital control, compromises and the contradictions between feminist aims and publishers' demands for profitability. Several feminist publishing houses have been set up in the States and the need for a British one has long been felt.

Over the last few months, efforts have been successfully made to raise sufficient capital to set up a women's publishing house. It is called Feminist Books. We have a four women editorial board, one of whom is also the full time worker. We are quite independent and our editorial policy is as collective as it can be; three out of four of us must agree on what we will publish. We want authors to be fully involved in the production and distribution process so our contract with an author will offer her the option of joining the editorial board so that she has control over what happens to her work.

We have two books in the pipeline at the moment and are receiving and considering others. Our first book is **WEDLOCKED WOMEN** by Lee Comer (see Spare Rib No. 24) and will be published on September 4th and not May as was stated. The second book is an anthology of writings from the Women's Movement, edited by Sandra Allen and Jan Wallis. (Closing date for ms. July 15th). As well as novels, poetry and drama, we intend to publish non-sexist children's books and a *real* book on female sexuality.

Do write to us for more information: Feminist Books, P.O. Box HP5, Leeds LS6 1LN.

Communes.

No. 4 of the journal of the communes movement, price 20p, is now out. The movement was set up to create a federal society of communities and to help and encourage people to commit themselves to harmonious communal living. The journal could be of interest to women since communal living, though not providing a total answer to sexism, at least often attempts to avoid the male dominance of the nuclear family situation. All you women who've ever been told to get on with the breadmaking and baby-raising while your old men get it together with the tractor, why not write an article about it? Articles and subscriptions (24p inc. p. & p.) to The Commune Movement, Lochill Cottages, Ringford, Castle Douglas, Kirkcubrightshire, Scotland.

Collective Child Care

The Children's Community Centre collective in Dartmouth Park Hill has written a pamphlet on their experiences of collective child care which is more compulsive reading than Doris Lessing. It is honest, self-critical, democratic, open, personal, political, full of pictures... of the kids, the front door of the house, the area, an expedition to Marx's grave

in Highgate cemetery, the back yard, more kids, smiling, touching the ceiling, sticking their tongues out, asleep, hugging the adults... practical sections on how to deal with the local authority and how to recognise "points where groups could go adrift and end up taking on work that is the social responsibility of the local council", well laid out, nice letaset, typed without mistakes, lovely yellow cover. While trying to write this I kept being drawn into bits I'd already read three times... read it, set up your own centre and write a pamphlet like this one. 15p plus 5p stamp and 2p to cover envelope, from 123 Dartmouth Park Hill, N.19. Available also from left and community bookshops. **AS**

CLAP

Read the second CLAP (Community Levy for Alternative Projects) handbook and pass it on to any London businesses or individuals anywhere whom you think might want to support financially any of the new and old struggling projects in Britain listed which are too unusual, imaginative or revolutionary to get money from the regular sources. None of the projects makes a profit or pays more than a living wage. Contact CLAP, c/o BIT, 146 Gt Western Rd, W11.

Shrew.

The new Shrew, produced by the Ealing and Fulham group, and which deals with the group itself and its members' lives, is now out and can be obtained from the W.L. Workshop, 38 Earham St, London, WC2.

films

The Sydney Women's Film Group

has some good films made by its members which other people might like to use. They would like to send prints to women's groups in other countries and get prints of other films back. They distribute their films through a co-op which unites most independent film-makers in Sydney. Ideas, advice, contributions, experiences, requests for catalogues, etc., should be sent to Martha Kay c/o Words for Women, PO Box 81 Glebe, NSW 2037, Australia.

Women's Workshop/Artists Union

An exhibition by the workshop showing women's work in two and three dimensions as well as film and photography. From Monday July 15 for one week, with an evening of film, discussion and events on the opening evening beginning at 7.30. Art Meeting Place, 48 Earham Street, London WC2.

The New Era: The Journal of the World Education Fellowship

The July/August issue of the journal is on the theme of women and education. It's called 'The Making of the second sex', and articles include: 'Ladies don't play football - notes on sexism in Primary schools' by Anne Reyersbach, 'Women's Studies at Cambridge' by Joanna Mack, and 'Sex role constraints on freedom of discussion' by John Eliot. Single copies plus postage 25p, available from 18 Campden Grove, London W8 4JG.

housing rights handbook

by Marion Cutting

In the present housing situation it is becoming more and more difficult in many places to find reasonable accommodation that is cheap enough to rent or buy. Therefore when the landlord gives notice or starts harassing, or a dispute over who should share the matrimonial home blows up when a marriage is breaking down, everybody needs to know what the legal position is.

The Housing Rights Handbook* provides useful hints on what to do in many situations where there is a chance that accommodation will be lost, and gives at the same time the basic legal position.

Legal Rights

People have different rights according to the arrangement under which they occupy accommodation and depending on who their landlord, is, how much furniture or services they are given, and the rateable value of the property. There are sections in the book on people's legal rights in furnished and unfurnished accommodation, in local authority or housing association housing, in property with a high rateable value, in tied accommodation and when they are licensees lodging or sharing with others or getting board (such as breakfast) with the letting. Whatever the tenancy, however, nobody has to leave because the landlord has told them to do so or because they have been given a proper notice to quit. Only a court (County or High) can order them to leave and only the court official - the bailiff - can actually remove them or their belongings. There are also chapters on local authorities' general housing responsibilities and on their duty to help those who are homeless; also on harassment and on what the position is when housing difficulties occur with the breakdown of a marriage or cohabitation. Finally, some useful forms are reproduced - applications to the rent tribunal and rent officer, and a County court plaint form for use when the landlord goes to court to ask for a possession order.

The book was originally intended to be used by those whose job it is to advise people in difficulties - workers in advice centres, citizens advice bureaux, social workers - but it could be useful to people who are themselves in difficulty. It is written by a non-lawyer for people who have no knowledge of the law. It is meant to give at least some of the main facts so that anybody faced with, for example, notice to quit, can decide what they should do next.

When the Law lets you down

The book does not offer many solutions; there are many situations where even a perfect understanding of the law cannot provide a proper home because many types of accommodation are still not fully protected by the Rent Acts. Even so, there are all kinds of ways in which people can be helped when faced with eviction. Take council tenants, for example. Like housing association tenants they are not fully protected by the Rent Acts. This means that they can be evicted after being given a proper notice to quit and after a court order of possession has been granted against them. There is no way in law to enable them to keep their home once the local authority has decided to evict. There are, however, all kinds of ways in practice by which the local authority can be persuaded not to go ahead to evict and all kinds of arguments that can be used to try to stop them. For example, it can be said that a local authority is not managing its property sensibly if it evicts a tenant for whom it then has to take responsibility when that person becomes homeless.

Responsibility versus duty

If someone is homeless, the argument goes the other way; local authorities have a duty to help those that are homeless but do not always do so. Despite some changes in the law this year, local authorities still have a *duty*, given by a directive from the Secretary of State for Social Services, to help people

who are homeless "in circumstances which could not reasonably have been foreseen". Two basic problems can, however, arise. In the first place most local authorities have, following instructions in a recent government circular, placed the *responsibility* for giving accommodation to those who are homeless with the housing department; yet the *duty* remains with social service departments. Secondly, most local authorities just do not have enough accommodation to go round and therefore try in many ways to avoid helping. The handbook gives guidance on what to do and some of the arguments that can be used if there is trouble.

Marriage gives you...

If two people are married and own a home, then they both have a right to a share in its value, even if only one name is on the mortgage or the deeds. A woman, for example, can get a settlement of a proportion of the value of the property (often half) by a court as part of a divorce settlement, or can get the use of it for a period - very useful if there are children involved and the woman is to have the care of them. Nearly a quarter of the handbook covers what can be done to keep the use of the matrimonial home for the partner who is to keep the children, whether it be furnished or unfurnished, housing association or local authority, or owned. As the law stands at the moment, for example, the court can order a transfer of tenancy in private rented accommodation but not in local authority or housing association housing.

Living together gives you...

The position of cohabitants is also covered, though the law makes a clear distinction between the rights of people who are married and those who live together but are not; consequently, even a long standing cohabitation, unlike a marriage, gives no special rights.

A cohabitation is not even considered to be a family unit, and when the relationship breaks down, financial questions only are considered by the courts. Two people living together are considered in the same way as any other two people sharing accommodation would be, or as some kind of business arrangement. This means in practice that the woman often loses out. Unless a home is in joint names, only the person named on the rent book, the mortgage or deeds of title, has a right to the property or a share in it. Consequently, many women though they have contributed in time and energy towards the home and family find that the law does not in any way recognise the value of this effort when the relationship goes wrong. They can get maintenance if it is true, but only for the children, and have to fight every inch of the way to prove that they are entitled to a share in any property; they have to prove very clearly that they have contributed in specific financial ways, and even then the courts seem to be reluctant to grant them anything other than the return of their financial contribution. Anybody who is cohabitating should make sure that everything is in joint names.

Finally stay put

Whatever the type of accommodation, the advice is always to stay put. There is usually at least something that can be done to delay eviction, and in many cases the tenant stands a good chance of winning in the end. One of the problems is that good legal advice is not always available, or is not combined with a practical understanding of how local authorities work, of when the social service department or housing department will step in, or why a woman who wants a divorce cannot find somewhere to live before starting proceedings because the local authority will not want to help her and her children until she has at least a separation order and custody of the children. Hopefully this book will go some way towards providing the kind of information that is needed.

* by Marion Cutting. Available from Shelter, 86 Strand, London WC2R 0EQ. Price 60p plus 11p postage, or from W.H. Smiths.



SPARE

developing your films

Stephanie Gilbert

I feel that I should admit that until recently I was the sort of person who ignominiously shuffled in to a chemist clutching my camera, and got them to choose the film, put it in and later take it out, develop and print it. Anything to do with photography had always held great horrors and mysteries for me. However, due to the infinite patience of two photographers, Angela Phillips and Fran McLaine, we managed to compile this article, and conquer a few of my fears..

Developing really isn't difficult, but, as with most things, needs patience, practice and a close watch on the instructions.

**** FILMS :** There are infinite types of film all designed for different conditions. Two good average ones are :
ILFORD FP4, and KODAK PLUS X.

equipment that you need

DEVELOPING TANK

These are usually black plastic and come in lots of different sizes and makes, ranging in price from £2 to £4. Some of the larger ones are sold separate to the spirals so check.. The most well-known and available ones seem to be PATERSONS, JOBO, or COMBINA. A firm JOHNSONS used to do a very good standard range of equipment and chemicals, but they were recently bought up by an american firm HESTAIRS who have stopped producing them.

Probably the best to start with is PATERSONS UNIVERSAL, MULTI-UNIT 1...£2.51p. (multi-unit refers to the number of spirals you can fit in a tank, and therefore the number of films you can develop at once.) Many professionals use metal tanks, but the are expensive and more difficult to use.

AGFA do a 'daylight loading tank', but again it is much more expensive, and tricky to use.

THERMOMETER

A darkroom NOT a clinical one. Between 60 and 90 degrees F.

MEASURING CYLINDER

And also an ordinary measuring jug. If developing a large number of films you will need large ones; it tells you on the bottom of the developing tank, the quantity of liquid you will need to develop each film. Average 300ml for 35mm film, and 500ml for a 120 film. Most instructions are now in milli-litres or cc not in fluid ounces.

CLOCK

Properly known as a darkroom timer, it is in fact a clock with a large face and a sweep second hand. SMITHS do a good cheap one, as in the photo above.

LOADING BAG

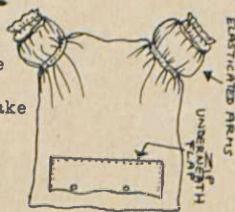
For loading the film onto the spiral that goes in the tank. This can be done in a dark-room, but if you haven't one you will need a bag, large enough to take a developing tank.. around £5.50p. (Under the bed-clothes WONT do, mainly because of the dangers of dust..)

CLIPS

The most usefull ones are small bulldog clips to hang up the negatives while drying. You will need one for each end of the film. You can use clothes pegs.

BITS & PIECES

A BOTTLE OPENER, for taking the top off the film cassette, A pair off SCISSORS, at least TWO LIGHTPROOF BOTTLES to keep chemicals in, a deep SINK with easy access to running water, a clean FUNNEL for pouring into those bottles..



CHEMICALS

DEVELOPER AND FIXATIVE.

Some photographers like to use a STOP BATH which is a chemical that helps retard development, and also removes developer liquid so that it doesn't pollute the fixative. Use is optional as you can use nice cheap running water...

*DEVELOPER.

This is a chemical that is bought either in concentrated liquid or powder form. Both therefore have to be mixed up into a working solution. Neither store or last well, the powder is the most stable, so at first if not doing a lot of developing regularly, buy in the smallest quantities possible.

You will find that each photographer has her/his own favorite developers for the different types of film and refinement required. To start with it is probably best to use a developer the same make as your film, as the instructions will be compatible and easier to follow.. There are innumerable different types.. Patersons, Tetenal, May & Baker, and the standard Ilford ID11, or PQ Universal, or Kodak D76... Probably the best for basic use is the Ilford PQ Universal.. (300cc = 49p) This is sold in highly concentrated liquid form.

(Universal means that it can be used as both a film and print developer. Unless it says 'Universal' check that you have the right one.)

The liquid ones are less of a hassle to use as the powder must be very well mixed or strained before use. You will need a lightproof bottle to keep your working solution in.

*FIXATIVE

Again available in powder or liquid forms. The powder is about half the price of the liquid, but for speed and convenience the liquid is easier.

However, I was told "don't get bamboozled into buying high/speed, fast acting liquid fix as leaving it longer to fix doesn't affect the quality of the film.."

Either way you usually have to mix it up in light proof bottle as the liquid is normally concentrated. Try to mix up only what you will need as, although it keeps better than the developer, it does deteriorate in time.

*If the solution IS kept, try to keep the bottle full as it is the air that damages it.

(May & Bakers AMFIX : high speed liquid fix.. 46p)

All PATERSONS chemicals are very good. And all chemicals are much cheaper in large quantities.

loading the film onto the spiral

THIS IS THE ONLY PART OF THE OPERATION THAT MUST BE DONE IN THE DARK : in a loading bag or dark-room.

It is also the only really tricky part.

PRACTISE FIRST, in the dark..

..you will find out why as soon as you try it.. It is even worth buying and wasting a film if you haven't got one to practise on.

* If using a cassette (a roll of film in container) you have to get the film out of the container. When winding film back, in the camera, stop as soon as you hear it click so that you leave yourself a bit of film protruding

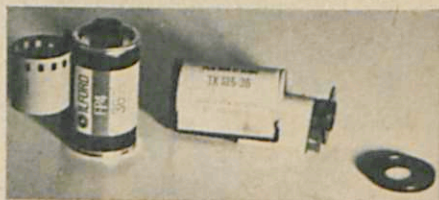
In the loading bag, or at hand in the dark room, you must have : ALL parts of the TANK, the film CASSETTE, a SCISSORS a BOTTLE OPENER.

*Some people don't take the film out of the container as it tends to unroll immediately, but feed it direct onto the spiral as shown in the photo. (NEXT PAGE)

Others remove the lid of the cassette with a bottle opener and slide the film out.

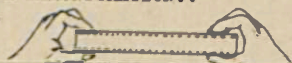
* A tapered end of film faces you. Cut this off square.

* This square end must be introduced into the spiral.



THIS PROCEDURE IS HORRIBLY DIFFICULT TO DESCRIBE. PLEASE ASK SALESMAN OF YOUR TANK FOR A DEMONSTRATION..

ALWAYS HOLD FILM BY THE EDGES, NOT OVER THE MIDDLE, EXCEPT AT EXTREME ENDS.

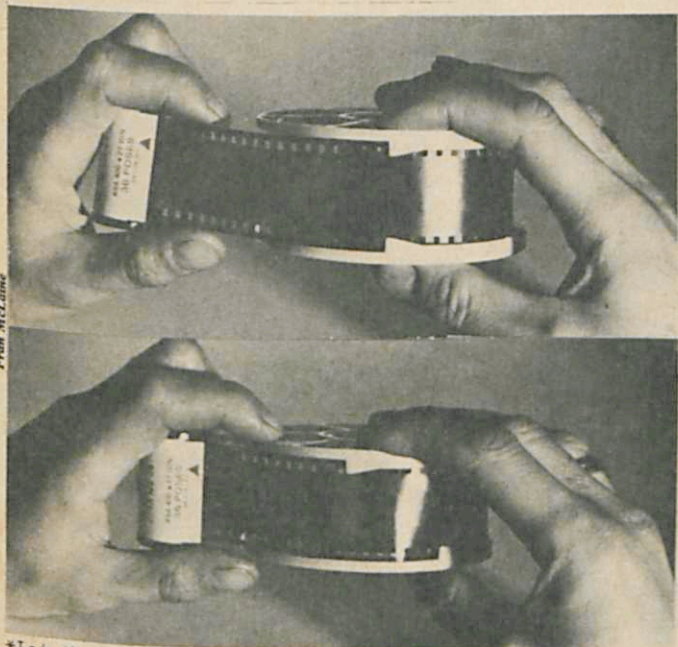


*The SPIRAL: Twist the two circles round till the two ball-bearings embedded in the plastic are opposite each other.

*Just in front of them you will find the entry slot for the film. Feed the film in gently holding it as in photo. Feed it in about 5".

*The circles of the spiral move away from each other in opposite directions.. then click, swivel, click, swivel, click.. and the film feeds itself in.. Manipulate it with your thumb moving back and forth.

PARTS



From McLaine

- *Let the action be as smooth as possible, and keep the film parallel to the swivel. If it twists, it comes out..
- REMEMBER..** this is why you MUST practise first..
- *Make sure film is completely onto spiral. Cut it off from cassette reel, being careful not to leave any tape on end.
- *Still in the dark, or in the bag, make sure you haven't dropped anything in the tank. The plastic CORE fits onto a peg at bottom of tank.
- *Push the spiral onto it, push it to bottom of tank.
- *Holding it firmly on peg, push on the plastic clip down to the spiral.
- *Put on internal tank lid, and FIRMLY SCREW on external tank lid. Beware of screw thread. Make sure it's on properly.
- *Put on tank cap.
- *YOU MAY NOW OPEN THE BAG.. or switch on lights.

prepare the chemicals

After loading your film in the tank, you should prepare your developer and fixative (and the STOP BATH if using it). The film won't mind waiting and if the room is the right temperature it will stop the tank cooling the liquids as you pour them in.

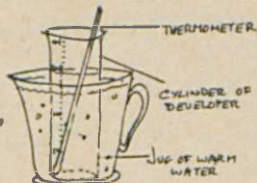
***DEVELOPER**: there are always instructions in the package, and a chart that will give you the correct temperature and developing time for your make and speed of film. Generally speaking the correct temperature is 68 degree F, (or 20 degree C) Look down the chart for your make of film, (TRI X, PLUS X, HP4, FP4, ect..) and read across the developing time.

The instructions will also give you the correct dilution with water for the concentrated and powder forms. Mix only as much as you need as it keeps even less well diluted or mixed.

Put your measuring cylinder of developer in a jug of warm water to heat it to required temperature. Check it with your thermometer, this must be accurate.

***FIXATIVE**. Prepare it as per instructions.

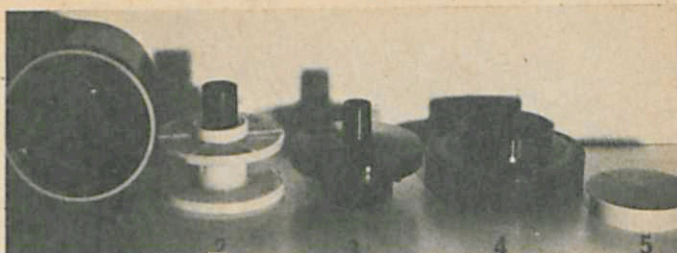
These chemicals can be used again. But **BEWARE**, they don't keep well and do wear out. Check your instructions carefully for details on this.



ready.. steady.. go..

Check the temperatures of your liquid.

- *get your **CLOCK** ready.
- *Remove the tank cap (NOT the whole lid)
- *Pour in developer quickly before the temperature changes.
- *Start timing from the **SECOND** you start pouring.
- ***REPLACE CAP**.
- ***AGITATE**. Check exact instructions, but generally you invert the tank back and forth for first 30 sec and tap it gently on table to help eliminate air bubbles. Then rock tank back and forth every minute till time is up.
- *Empty tank, as quick as possible (back into working solution bottle or down sink dependant on type of developer)
- *Pour running cold water into tank for two minutes. (If using **STOP BATH**, this should have been mixed ready and used now as instructed.)



PATERSONS MULTI-UNIT TANK £2.51p. Showing:

1. the tank on it's side.
2. a spiral, slotted onto the CORE, and held in place by the white plastic clip.
3. the internal tank lid that holds the core steady in the tank
4. the external tank lid.
5. the tank cap that you remove only when pouring in liquid

- *Empty tank completely and pour in fixative. This can be left 5 to 10 minutes depending on type and age of fix.
- *Pour fix back into your working solution bottle.
- *You can now take off LID off tank.

You can, at this stage, take out the spiral and VERY GENTLY pull out the first negative. If it is at all cloudy, not a clear image, then it is not properly fixed. If so, replace in tank, pour back fix, wait a few minutes longer. As the fix gets older, the fixing time takes longer and it is eventually ineffective and must be renewed. If you have been nosey and pulled out the whole negative strip, it is extremely difficult to replace it so don't..

*Leave the lid off the tank and pour in running cold water for about 20 minutes. DON'T skimp on this. All traces of chemicals MUST be washed off.

*Add 2 drops of washing up liquid to the water. Swivel spiral around just enough to mix it, but not make it frothy. (Don't get talked into buying PHOTO FLO' as sold in shops; is almost identical to wash-up liquid.)

*Remove spiral and gently unwind the film. Hang it up with your bulldog clips, ONE AT EACH END.

*You can remove any large droplets of water with clean damp chamois or viscose sponge. These drops can dry leaving patches on your negatives.

COMBINA X DOUBLE TANK with an automatic film loader to feed film onto the spirals.



HANGING PLACES

***DUST PROOF**. (Bathrooms are quite good..) If doing a lot of films at once, prepare a string to hang them all from.

Leave to dry for at least 1hr (if not 2 or 3 hrs) with the door shut to keep out cats, dogs or friends..

*To test that it is dry touch with the finger, preferably NOT on the emulsion (dull side) as this damages most easily.

*When completely dry, cut into lengths and slide into your protective negative sheets.

** Even if it feels dry, it takes a while for the emulsion to harden, so don't be impatient. DON'T force drying with a fan heater..it just blows dust all over it..

CLEANING UP

It is very important that all traces of chemical are removed from all your equipment..spiral, tank, measuring jugs ect.. ALSO, don't store the clip that holds the spiral in place, on the core., as this will stretch it.

BAD NEGATIVES

Streaky ones, blotchy ones, dense grey ones.. There are a multitude of things that can go wrong. BUT, if you are careful, follow the instructions, use the right temperature liquids etc, they should be OK.

dust: your great enemy

KEEP EVERYTHING CLEAN..try to work in a dust free room.

CHEMICALS

These do wear out. Follow instructions as to when they wear out, and use them at correct temperature.

printing

Obviously once you've got as far as developing your own, you're going to want to print, and this is where all the creative bit comes in. You would then need to invest in a dark room and all the equipment. By far the best way to start is to join a local club, or go along to EVENING classes. At least there you have access to all their equipment and specialised help. Unfortunately I have never heard of any classes run by women photographers, and male ones tend to be a particularly sexist breed.. but they do so love expounding all their knowledge, so you will learn. if you can bear it.

"She's just ordinary like me"

Angela Phillips



Liz Trott

Liz Trott has an isolated childhood split between boarding school and home where the front door was locked at 8.30pm, and the only way to meet anyone was by joining the church choir or the Young Conservatives. Her interest in the academic life was encouraged by a school teacher who specialised in seducing young girls and playing them off against one another. He was responsible both for getting her into Cambridge and the start of an ulcer.

By the time she went to university she was already engaged, but she could only see her fiancé at weekends. For a year she spent the time between weekends drinking and chasing men. 'Even though I had this relationship it seemed that the only way to be at Cambridge was to be in some way connected with men. I didn't talk to women and I didn't think about them. I had some friends in college but they were secondary, I would fall back on them if I had no one else to talk to.'

Liz asked her tutor if she could get married, live with her husband and continue her studies. The answer was no. If she wished to marry she would not be allowed to see her husband except at weekends. As a result she left university and within months was pregnant and then married.

'We went to live in two rooms in Southwark. I was amazed because people were so friendly, so completely different from the people in the suburbs where I'd lived, it was a revelation. I looked after the baby, cooked for mates, laughed at their jokes. I used to spend a whole day cooking for people to come to supper. I was submerged straight away and I used to feel pleased when someone came to see me because I felt at such a disadvantage with the kids. If you've got three you think it's a big treat if someone comes to see you because they're coming in spite of them. It's doing you a favour so you are extra nice to everyone who comes along. I couldn't see any way of separating myself from the children, so I never had any uninterrupted time for other people.'

In 1967 they joined a Catholic Marxist group run by a young Dominican who was working with Cooper and Laing.

'Suddenly politics burst in on us. We called ourselves Catholic Marxists and had a magazine called *Slant*. We were a large group

'I agree with everything they say, but I'm not in the women's liberation movement. I've lost count of the times I've heard that. Who belongs to the women's liberation movement? How do you belong? Why are some women in the movement while others are not.

There is no club, no membership form. Yet the mystique of the tough, self-sufficient, liberated woman lives on, fascinating to some, frightening to others.

In an attempt to get over this, I've interviewed six different women about how they 'joined'. The results were interesting as much for their similarities as their differences. We will publish these interviews regularly in the hopes of showing other women a little more of what it's about on a very personal level.

Angela Phillips

of people which operated for me partly in the same way as the women's movement does now. It was a network of friends with similar ideas who supported each other. Being a woman I got less and gave more of the support.

'We started a housing advice service together. We realised it was a bit of a rip-off but we thought we could help people with housing problems. What it came down to was that we didn't have any houses and desperate people used to come and ask for advice. There I was with my middle class background giving away something that I hadn't got. I sat in front of people and at the top of the form I had to write a 'character assessment.' When I realised what that was about it put me off social work for life. After two years we gave it up.

'I spent the next year wishing I hadn't given it up and wondering what to do next. I thought maybe I should go back to university or get a job. I spent eighteen months not being able to do a thing and not realising how much time was taken up with the house and the kids - never sitting down during the day and feeling guilty every time I read a book.

'A friend of mine had gone to Leeds and got involved with the women's movement there. She was very enthusiastic and talked about women having a hard time. It was literally the first time I'd ever thought that women might have a hard time. I thought it sounded pretty peculiar and extravagant, after all why would women want to be on their own? What basis was there for them to get together anyhow? But by then I was desperate and I thought if I went to one of those groups I'd be able to get myself together and get a job.' A little later she came across a notice outside a Soho church advertising a talk on Women's Liberation.

'It was Micheline Wandor talking. I was impressed by the way she looked and spoke. When she started talking about her marriage and kids I was even more impressed because I thought, she's not that special, she's just ordinary like me. The things she said about kids seemed true, though not in any way I'd ever thought about. She didn't make any extreme statements she was just honest. After that I found my local group. Out of curiosity more than anything else.

'I felt really frightened when I went into the house where the meeting was. I had no idea

what they'd be like, I thought they'd all be very together and frightening. My heart pounded every time anyone said anything to me.

Politically I was really arrogant, I wanted to know what the women's movement had to do with Marxist theory, because if it didn't have anything to do with 'real politics' I wasn't going to join. It wasn't as frightening as I'd thought. The women were all so warm and friendly, so I went back. I thought it was funny being in a group of women but I liked it. I was surprised how much fun we had. It was a consciousness-raising group; we would take a different topic each week, e.g.

family, dependency, sexuality, our images of ourselves and where they come from, and go round the group, each woman talking without interruptions, questions afterwards. What came out of that very clearly was how many of our experiences were common to all of us. We realised how completely we had absorbed the ideas and conventions that keep us passive, with no time for ourselves. We began to see our common oppression. Every week I come away feeling set up.

'I changed very slowly after joining the group. I found it difficult to tell people how I was thinking; I would talk for hours to Tony, but not to the children or my family. I think now that was because I needed to set myself up as a separate person and if I let the children in, they would take over that area too. Although Tony was sympathetic, and recognised early on some of the stereotypes we were caught in, it has taken a long time for roles to alter in the family. It's only recently I've realised that there have to be areas that he can't take over, as well, if I'm to get anywhere at all. I'd been thinking of myself as someone's wife or someone's mother for years, I needed to be myself.

'I began worrying less about getting a job outside when I realised I had been working hard for years and denying that it was work. I felt far less isolated, and therefore less keen on a paid job as a way out of isolation and uselessness. But the most important change for me was in meeting, talking to, seeing women for the first time in my life, it was as though half the world had been invisible and suddenly came into focus. Like coming alive after years half dead ■

Info...Odds & Sods...A

women & the media

Dear Spare Rib,

The ways in which the Women's Movement uses the Media have appeared to change even in its short life to date. I wonder, however, if anyone really knows how effective feminist 'propaganda' is. I am very interested in preparing a report for possible publication on the use of the media by the government. Would anyone interested in forming a group to carry out this study please write to me at the address below.

Since it would be necessary to use surveys etc, it would obviously involve quite a lot of work, but if enough people were interested it should be possible to broaden the scope of the study to include work on the organisation and administration of the movement, the impact of the movement on the law, national attitudes and so on.

Love and best wishes,

William Watson,
Reigate, Surrey RH2 7HG.

The contact address for the Women in Media group is Sandra Brown, 59 Drayton Gardens, London SW10. They are also preparing a report on the image of women put across by the media.

women writers

Dear Spare Rib,

I note that Lee Comer mentions a lack of knowledge about the life of the house-wife, and Molly Parkin laments a lack of good women writers.

May I suggest Margaret Laurence's *The Firedwellers*, as well as Laurence's other novels *The Stone Angel*, *A Jest of God* (filmed as *Rachel, Rachel*) - as very good books about women by a woman which have been too much overlooked in the past.

Love,
Elspeth Woodske.

Dear Spare Rib,

As the (unidentified) journalist man friend Molly Parkin quotes in her article on male attitudes towards her novel 'Love All' may I add a couple of words. It's true that I found the preparations for the buggery of the narrator/heroine offensive, but only because I felt it was a cold-blooded prelude to a warm-blooded act. I also disliked the opening and closing sequences in which the narrator fellates her father because (as a father) I have to acknowledge a

taboo which I can't imagine breaking; or rather, enjoying.

Whether or not other male readers are upset by the sexual equality which Molly feels her novel boosts (and indeed rests upon) I can't say. I happen to think it is comic and right and a good deal more than wishful thinking. As a writer and a feminist Molly Parkin has always been more equal than others; I've seen editors turn tail and run when she's appeared. One mildly sexist editor in particular, so perhaps she has a point.

She's a lovely writer anyway and 80% of her book is hilarious. I hope some paperback firm will take the plunge.

Yours, Philip Oakes

social work

Dear Spare Rib,

At the moment I am applying for trainee social work posts, and am finding difficulty in reconciling liberation ideas with the family service provided by the local social services. Do you know of anyone with these problems? Elspeth M. Tarbotton.

Yes, you can contact a group called Case Con, Flat 3, 55 Highbury Park, London N/5.

The Spring issue '74 produced by their editorial collective is a special women's issue and contains some excellent articles and analysis by women who are concerned with the expression of their political ideas as women within their practice as social workers (price 15p plus postage).

creches

Dear Spare Rib,

I am writing to you to ask if any other organisations have any experience about setting up, or at least trying to get our local Chamber of Commerce to set up a shoppers creche in the centre of York, enabling mothers/fathers to have their children capably looked after while they shop for an hour or two. We feel that the demand for this facility is considerable and have done quite a bit of introductory work to achieve this but would be grateful for advice and/or information from groups embarking on a similar project. Yours sincerely,
Jenny Wynne,
York Women's Action Group,
41, Peel Close,
Heslington, York.

magazines

Dear Sisters,

If anyone has issues of feminist magazines which they don't want can they let me know.

I work in a hospital ward and apart from the usual women's magazines there is very little for patients to read while waiting for examinations.

Marilyn Leask

40, St Augustine's Road,
London NW1.

Tel: 485 2868.

Junta

Dear Spare Rib,

I read your magazine every month and I think it's great. In this month's issue I felt that the letter to the Chilean Junta should have been included under 'The ones that got away'. The wording was not what I would have expected, ie 'We respectfully ask you, as soon as possible, to release the women and all the political prisoners who are in your hands.' Are women a breed apart? It stopped me using the letter to write to the Junta, and may have stopped others. It may seem a very petty point to some, but surely it is this sort of discrimination that we are trying to abolish.

I understand that the space is used as a notice board and therefore Spare Rib is not at fault.

I find the magazine very helpful in providing new ideas and material and sources of information for someone who is always arguing about and discussing the position of women with everyone. I enjoy Li Shuangshuang as I think it can be used to look at oneself objectively, like the diary you used to publish. By associating with the characters I think one can sometimes find answers to one's own questions and problems. I would be very sorry to see Li Shuangshuang go as I think it is good to have something like that in the magazine.

Wishing you all the best,
Mary Doran, Dublin 4, Ireland.

contraception

Dear Ms Rib,

My mate and I would like to share with you a condition and some questions we are experiencing. Our form of contraception is this mysterious piece of plastic and alloy inserted within my mate's uterus (an IUD) which has been quietly effective (given the range

of alternatives and success present in civilization now) and is now fairly troubleless after an initial psychic and physical shock for Sparks of several months. Within one year Sparks will have to have the IUD removed and there is something disagreeable to us in having another one put in.

Specifically it continues with the trip of having contraception being a process worked upon the body and consciousness of a woman, whereas the male regenerative system is suitably less complex, with fewer hormonal hookups, and it's about time. Condoms do not appeal to either of us. The state of vasectomies (as we are presently aware - but this is one of the questions: just where's the exploration of this method, the information and the possibilities?), pushes against that choice as we see now procreating once maybe twice, within our lifetimes.

So what of a male pill? It seems that it is socially, biologically and scientifically correct to develop such a method - fat chance in the male dominated medicine business, research labs, etc. An effective and restorable method of male contraception is what Sparks and I are looking for and asking about, whether surgically or chemically applied.

Sincerely, Philip Bozenich.
18 Maes Mwyn, Llandeilo,
Dyfed, Wales.

*Dear Philip,

There has been no research in this country into the male pill, or any where else in Europe. Oddly enough, the only place in the world where any work has been carried out on this subject is Australia, where an extensive research programme has been taking place. When we enquired about the results of this research we were told that manufacture of a male pill had been held up because of its potential disadvantages, namely the chance of abnormalities in the sperm after taking the pill, resulting in possible foetal abnormalities.

So it seems that your suspicions regarding male dominated medicine are confirmed, not only by the fact that so little research has been carried out, but also because production of the pill has been curtailed because of possible side effects; a situation which hardly parallels that of the female contraceptive pill! Sorry not to be very helpful.

The Principle of Keeping Jobs

by Claire Walsh, Press Officer for Allen Lane, who is writing in a personal capacity.



Photo Ann Smith

I have worked as press officer for Allen Lane, the hard book division at Penguin Books, for over four years. I was made 'redundant' at 5.30 pm on Friday, 19 April.

Uncertainty about the extent of cut backs and reorganization had been preoccupying most of us for months. I, for one, had been asking about the future of the press office since last December. All this had culminated in the closure of Penguin Education as a separate imprint, and with it, the loss of 47 jobs. Penguin and Allen Lane would, in future, publish fewer books; a new editorial structure was proposed; and we had a written agreement that there would be no more redundancies. So I was not prepared for that 90 second interview.

The weekend was painful when it was not numbing. I had been offered good money – a year's salary plus holiday bonus – and I could have used it. But my first reaction was that the job was most important, and although I had spent quite a bit of time speculating about the way I'd have the flat refurnished, and the holiday I would have with my daughter – I decided to trust my first instincts, literally to put money where my mouth was and to fight.

The following Monday, members of both unions represented in the John Street (London) office of Penguins, ASTMS and NUJ, held a prolonged union meeting. We decided that, from 9.30 am the next day, we would continue our meeting, place pickets on the door, and accept only union or personal calls on the switchboard. Among us, we represented the vast majority of employees. We wanted from management the withdrawal of my redundancy notice on three grounds. It contravened our procedural agreement; it contradicted the 'no redundancies' pledge; and my job was not, in any case, redundant. We further called for a promise that there would be no further compulsory redundancies for twelve months.

Our action was quickly made official by my union, ASTMS, and by the NUJ. We held a meeting at Penguin – I'd guess that over 200 people were present; members of ASTMS, NUJ and SOGAT representing warehouse workers. It was agreed unanimously that Penguin workers would black Allen Lane/Kestral (hard back children's books) until our demands were met. The meeting further supported our decision not to move to new offices in Victoria before a satisfactory outcome.

Back in London, we had felt that, perhaps we might find time dragging in our prolonged, day long meetings. In fact, we were busy all the time. We received messages from other publishing workers, from authors and journalists. Print workers and postmen refused to cross our picket lines. During discussions it was obvious that people were not supporting me as an individual. Much more important – they were supporting the principle of keeping jobs, and we spent time talking about our work, whether we were secretaries, assistants, editor or publicist.

Finally on Friday afternoon, it was all over. Management recognized the validity of our demands. I was back at work and no one else could be found redundant over the next twelve months. We, in our turn, agreed to co-operate in the move to Victoria, and negotiate new job descriptions. So I am working now, and gladly, on Allen Lane autumn books.

There are so many lessons. First, any job must be protected. Publishing is the only industry I know well, but I think the argument applies everywhere else. If a job is lost it is lost forever. Second, organise. As women, we must especially make sure our interests are protected by our union, and further that we make sure our union understands and works towards the fulfillment of our demands. In London, the most important and courageous support came from women – secretaries, assistants, and telephonists. Whatever the outcome, they would have to meet the same people they had denied a telephone line, if from here, what a cliché, the raising of consciousness begins, well, what a nice start■

A TALE OF OLD AND NEW



*The Quilting Party, artist unknown, third quarter of the nineteenth century.
A household entertaining neighbours during a quilting bee.*

Last month the visual arts section ended on a determinedly upbeat note. Women, we said, have the greatest incentive to create alternative structures and new definitions of art and artist. We couldn't leave such a statement up in the air so we're looking at some women-made structures, both past and present. The Women's Art History collective have repeatedly come across all-women studios and women's art societies – "one old mistress leads us to another," they say. These groupings grew out of women's exclusion from male academies and studios; they were often defensive and founded on the sense of inferiority ingrained into women artists. Today things are different; women's independent groupings are constructive, and critical of

male institutions and they vary enormously in their aims and attitudes. Some are strictly professional and work within the art establishment, others reject everything to do with it. Rosie Parker looks at one of the latter groups in London, and next month Jenny Rodwell reports from a women's co-operative gallery in New York, but first Griselda Pollock examines a completely autonomous creative tradition amongst women.

PATCHWORK

The whole question of separatism and women's art is being hotly discussed these days while women explore the alternatives to established male-dominated institutions and search to create an imagery that can express

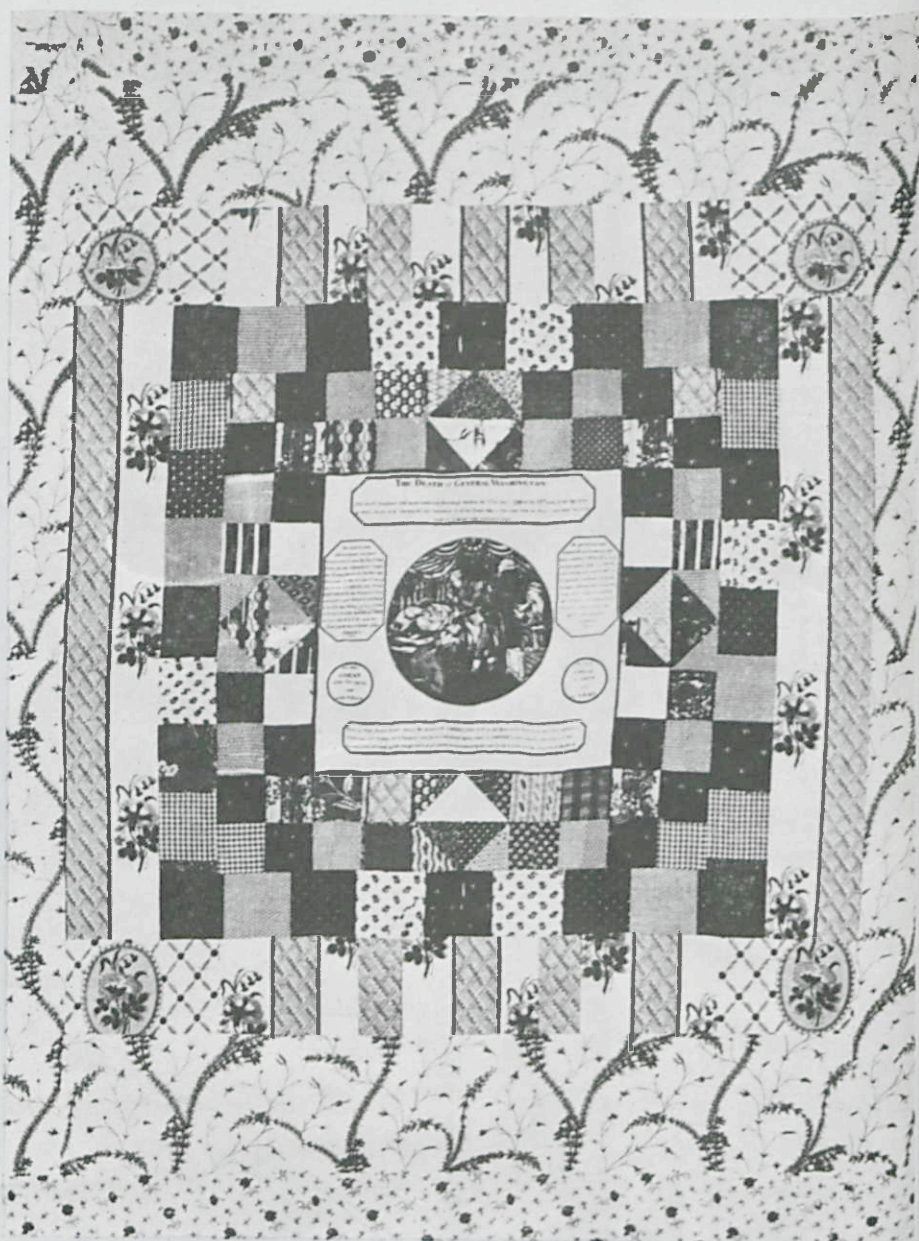
and use hitherto unexplored experiences of women. But women have had an autonomous creative tradition with their own organisations and exhibiting places in the past, these have not been recognised to be within the structure of 'real art'. Women's work in the crafts has been relegated to a place low in the hierarchy of the arts and the treatment of this craft tradition by history is interestingly different from the treatment given to the Fine Arts. A quick look at just one tiny part of the crafts can shed light on the troubled question of women's separatism.

The American pieced quilts have been much publicised in the last few years. Feminists in magazines like *The Feminist Art Journal* and *MS* have produced fascinating studies of these superb creations and of the generations of American women who made them in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But side by side with feminist researches runs a more commercial promotion of American quilts through large exhibitions in prestigious museums and commercial West End galleries where the spreads are exhibited hung on white washed walls like so many abstract paintings. And now a large and luscious book has been published by Studio Vista, 'America's Quilts and Coverlets' (Safford & Bishop) which lavishly illustrates many of the types of bed covers produced in the last two centuries. It is however more a typical craft or antique history book and as such provides a lot of illustration of the objects but the text is short, historical and disappointing. Thus on one hand we have the feminist desire to bring to light an area of women's creative history, while on the other a tendency to glorify a new commodity in the art market.

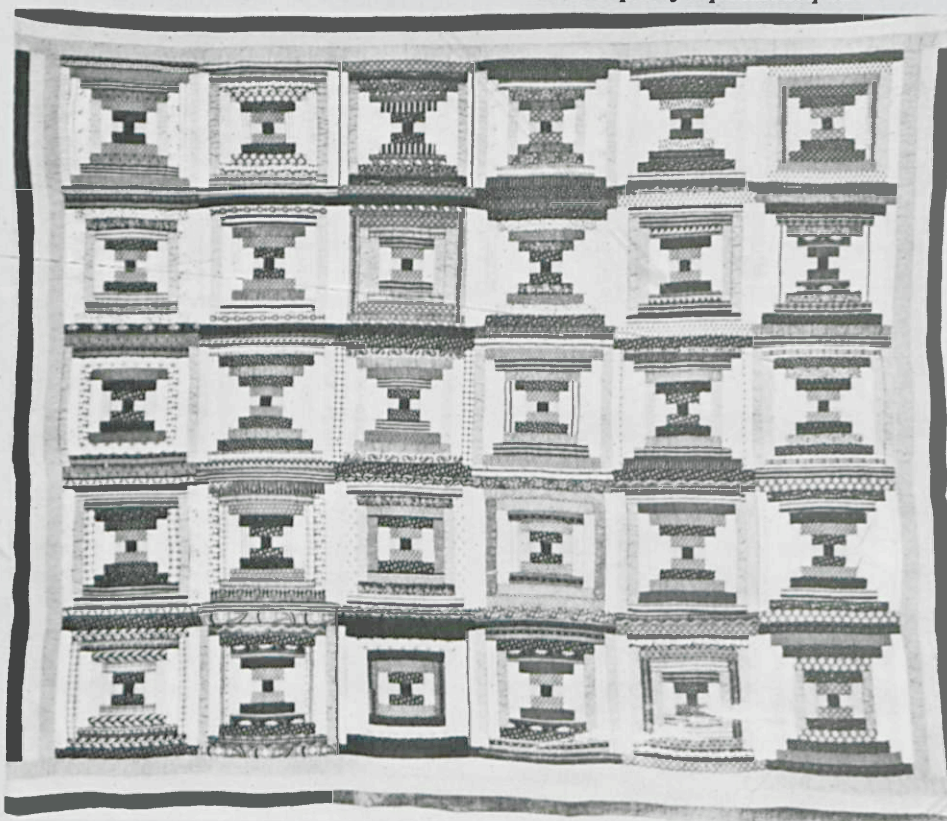
The Objects, the quilts themselves are inspiring. Made from thousands of small ▶

pieces of shaped, colored material which are sewn into elaborate and stunning patterns. They glory in such names as 'Jacob's Ladder', 'Mariner's Compass', 'Sunburst', 'Star of Bethlehem', 'Wild Goose Chase', 'Tree of Life' and many more. Each of these names refers to a category of patterns which are varied by each individual woman in her choice of colour and size of quilt. One quilt of 1890 is made up of small squares built up in a pattern called log cabin because of the use of overlapping corners used in the construction of the log cabins. Each square is made up of four or five concentric squares of different colours of strips of material. The colours not only form a pattern within the square, but over the whole quilt of sixty squares these different bands of colour form diamonds of dark and light tones. The intricate planning of colour for these quilts makes them dazzling to the eye. Many actually play on more sophisticated optical illusions like the 'Baby Block' design which has the effect of steps or cubes in three dimensions created by interplays of dark and light colours.

But this approach of merely looking at the finished product, leaves the reader with an inadequate idea of by whom and for whom these quilts were made. A recent catalogue of a large exhibition of the quilts in America was dedicated to the 'anonymous women whose skilled eyes and hands created the American pieced quilt'. Yet many of the quilts are actually signed and dated. Parallel to the illusion that quilts are one of the anonymous crafts, runs the idea that they were made for purely utilitarian reasons of warmth and comfort. In fact they were, and still are, exhibited with pride at local shows and fairs and the best of them were kept sometimes one for show, or for some honored guest. They are often found to have been listed in wills and passed on from generation to generation as objects of especial value.



The Death of General Washington, 1800-1810. 97½" x 96", an example of a political quilt



Log Cabin, c. 1890. 68" x 60"

More interesting than the value attached to the quilts by their makers, is the subject matter of the quilts. The quilts celebrated the joys and sorrows of a woman's life. The Bridal Quilt was usually made between the time of the engagement and the marriage and was made of the finest and most expensive materials a girl could afford. She was prepared for the skills needed for this finest of all quilts by practice on up to twelve quilts which she was required to have made before this date. There were also Mourning and commemoration quilts in sombre colours and Friendship Medley quilts made up of pieces of material from friends' dresses, which had a special sentimental significance.

Political loyalites also went into quilts, as for instance in the case of Mrs Cook who celebrated her patriotism for the South by her Secession quilt of 1866. Emblems of political parties have been incorporated into quilts.

Thus a high degree of personal and emotional significance was sewn into these bedspreads which is an important part of the history of the quilts that is usually overlooked. If the important events and emotions of human life can be incorporated into patchwork bedspreads what happens to all our high-flying ideas about Great Art and its Important Values as opposed to low art and its merely

decorative and utilitarian purposes? They are stood on their head and we can see that women's quilts offer an alternative set of relationships between objects, makers, and users in which skill, craft, meaning and purpose are integrated into daily life.

Much is made usually of the collective aspects of the crafts as opposed to the more individualistic and self-expressive pursuits of the Fine Arts. The quilts provide an interesting comment on this misconception.

church quilting bee.

A feminist study of the history of the American pieced quilt thus opens many doors which traditional craft history by men leave firmly closed particularly in relation to the identity and intentions of the women who made the quilts. But the patchwork quilts have benefitted from the respectability in the late twentieth century of abstract forms in art. The geometric patterning of women's crafts of the mid nineteenth century have been awarded spurious and retrospective justification by

the whole concept of sewn work is dangerous to the artists as a recent example shows. A reviewer of Stephanie Bergman's sewn canvasses wrote:

These pictures are held together by stitches. . . Working with a stock pile of canvas that she has colour-dyed or otherwise saturated with pigment, Bergman scissors the stuff into shapes and she then machine seams them together. Baldly stated like this the process sounds dire, an unpromising way to go about making pictures and more especially as it is a woman doing it. In fact, the results have nothing to do with patchwork quilts or cottage industries and painting is the only generic term that will do.

Bergman is being defended against damaging associations with a female craft and the reviewer finds it necessary to describe a process which sounds remarkably similar to patch work in pretentious technical terms.

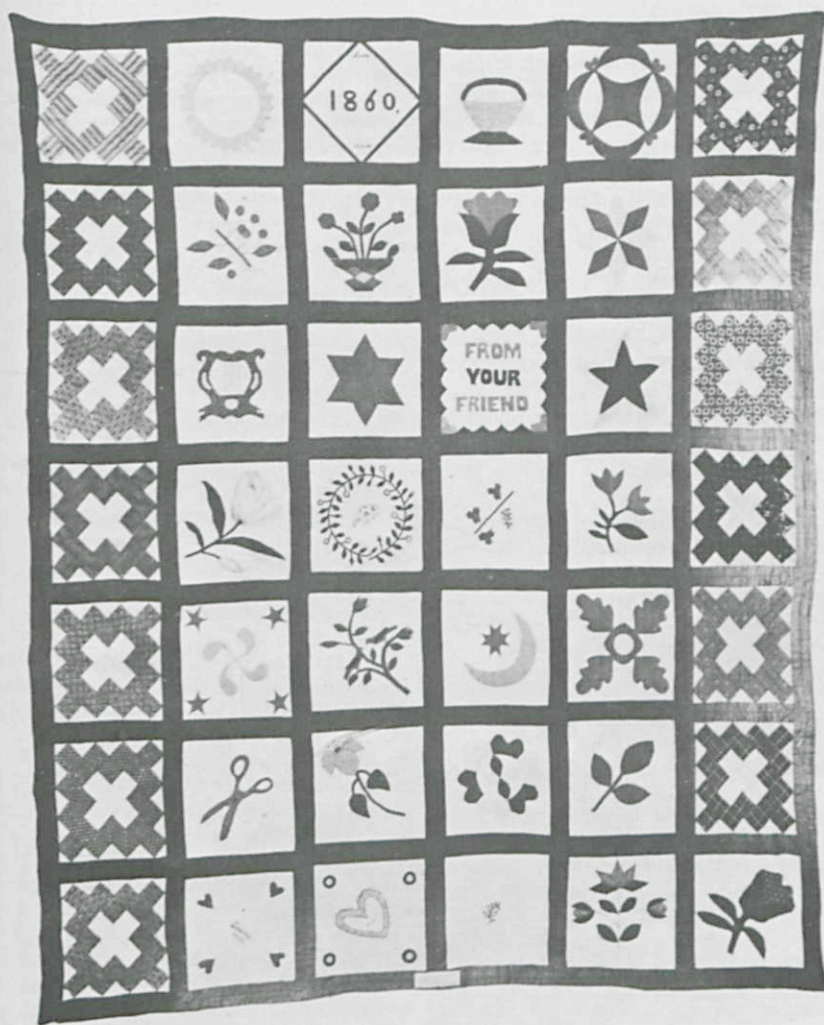
By looking at American pieced quilts as a test case, we can see that a history of the crafts which can show the whole social, political and aesthetic context of the making of these objects offers a confirmation of women's autonomous creative traditions. It also offers warnings. We do not want merely to vindicate women quiltmakers of the past or even to make a case for special qualities of women's participation in the crafts. It must aim to offer an alternative way of making, using and appreciating art from the fine art establishment that prevails today. And in this way the 'pieced' together history of the patchwork quilt can give encouragement to women artists today, to ignore the criticism of 'separatism' and take pride in women's heritage from the past.

America's Quilts and Coverlets.

by Carleton L. Safford

and Robert Bishop

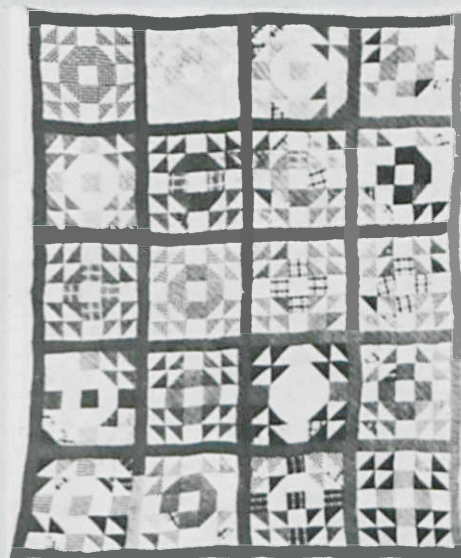
Studio Vista £10.50



Applique and patchwork Friendship quilt, 1860, 92½" x 75½"

The patchwork quilt was designed and sewn by one woman in so far as she chose the pattern, and the material. But when she had made the top layer it was necessary to join it to the layers of padding and backing which provided the warmth of the coverlet. This was done at a Quilting Bee which has been charmingly illustrated by an anonymous (?) folk artist of the late nineteenth century. The women of a community came together to sew the many small and repetitive stitches of the quilted pattern through the different layers. Each woman had the responsibility to sew as well as she could for the sake of the quiltmaker. In the evening of a day of a quilting bee, the men were invited to join in for general social activities. The occasion was not merely a day for women's gossip as it has often been described in social history. Patricia Mainardi in a brilliant article in the *Feminist Art Journal* on the quilts, pointed out that Susan B. Anthony, a leading American suffragette made her first political speech to a

comparison with men's art of the mid twentieth. A geometric quilt can hang on the wall and remind the art public of a Frank Stella or a Kenneth Noland abstract painting, but only in formal terms of colour and pattern. As we have just seen, however, much of the significance of the quilts lies in the other, non-formal areas of their subject matter and context. And what about the other kinds of coverlets that the Safford and Bishop book illustrate, or other crafts like knitting and weaving, which do not look like American abstract art? They have not found their entrée because the new fashion for the American patch work quilt is in no way a real reassessment of women's work or of the crafts in relation to the so-called Fine Arts, but merely a convenient upgrading of quilts to the level of art object. The linsey wollsey quilts with their brilliant colours and detailed patterns of stitches, the white work spreads of amazingly fine needle technique are still relegated to the low echelons of crafts. Indeed



Goose in the Pond or Young Man's Fancy, c. 1900. 75" x 62" A country quilt in many printed calicoes and checks.

HOUSE WORK

*Bless my little kitchen, Lord,
I love its every nook,
And bless me as I do my work,
Wash pots and pans and cook.*

This verse was on a souvenir ceramic plate tacked onto the world of the kitchen at 14, Radnor Terrace, Lambeth – a kitchen knee high in garbage, old newspapers, half drunk coffees, milk rotting bottles, fag ends and grubby plastic cartons. The kitchen was part of a project undertaken by six women. For two weeks they worked together on the South London Women's Centre, painting it, renovating it, and finally creating rooms which exposed the hidden side of the domestic dreams: "Rooms as images of mental states from unconscious basements to hot tin rooftops." (Kate Walker)

"A room as a chrysalis – using my appearance and the room as a projection of myself – positive and negative." (Sue Madden)

The house was on view during April and May. An orange front door opened onto a hall carpeted with artificial grass where a black stair case, covered in chalked poems and quotations, led to Kate Walker's kitchen – a nightmare kitchen, oppressive and cluttered. Footsteps on the floor marked an endless, persistent circle from fridge to basin to stove and back again. Out of the centre of the stove floated an enormous wedding cake complete with silver bells, lace and blossoms, while below it, half submerged in a heap of garbage lay a woman's body. Scattered on the floor nearby were traces of a female childhood – dolls and the story of Cinderella written out in coloured crayons. In contrast to the general sordid chaos, the cupboards were obsessively tidy with packets of food carefully balanced on top of each other and towels precisely piled and neatly folded.

silver beer bottles

If the basement represents the instinctual, nurturing aspect of the home in its blackest form, the ground floor rooms dealt with the social and emotional expectations bound up with marriage. On one side of two adjoining rooms there was a bride swathed in white gauze who stretched out her arms to welcome an unseen groom. She was placed in an all white environment with chocolate box landscapes and collages of Princess Anne's wedding decorating the walls. On the mantelpiece, along with a copy of the Common Prayer book and Charles Dickens's Great Expectations, was a long line of silver beer bottles capped by baby bottle teats. The other room was all black and contained a corpse wrapped in a grey blanket. Dust surrounded the body, a pair of scuffed slippers lay nearby and a man's carefully folded grey shirt was placed in the grate. On the mantelpiece a black piece of paper read, "died... believed... had failed... half embalmed... road of love and unselfishness." And the room was presided over by a big, black leather chair. Kate Walker says that she purposely used the most trite, stale images associated with women in an effort to bring over their true implications. She stopped painting and began to create environments because she wanted to find a more immediate way of working; a method which brings quick results and reactions. She couldn't integrate painting, for her a slow, intense, isolated process, into the rest of life with her children. "I can't bear the idea of a one sided existence totally dedicated to my art," she says, "I'd rather think of myself as a housewife than an

artist." Looking back at the Radnor Terrace project she regrets that she stopped work while the house was on view – her rooms evolve as she works on them and by presenting them as a finished product she thought the "human, tatty immediacy was a bit lost".

filming cleansing rituals

Upstairs was an all white, shaded, claustrophobic bedroom. Sue Madden called the room Chrysalis because she intended to use the room as a projection of a space in which "to grow and transform". She wanted to externalise and examine this process in a film using both the room and her appearance as an extension or reflection of her changing states of mind. She says that the following quotations were her starting points: "A woman must continually watch herself... From earliest childhood she has been taught and persuaded to survey herself continually. And so she comes to consider the surveyed and the surveyor within her as the two constituent yet always distinct elements of her identity as a woman." (John Berger) "Each sister wearing masks of revlon, clairol, playtex, to survive. Each sister faking orgasm under the systems very concrete bulk at night, to survive." (Robin Morgan)

With these ideas in mind Sue was going to start by filming removing rituals; plucking eyebrows, shaving armpits and legs, cutting toe nails, applying face packs, astringents etc. Working consciously through these activities "which wipe away women's identity", and moving on from them, she hoped to bring together the surveyed and surveyor within herself. Yet when it came to filming herself she couldn't do it: "As I started to wonder how I might explore these negative images I began to feel that performing these rituals yet again would be sacrificial and masochistic. For example I recently stopped shaving my legs after ten years, and it was a genuinely significant experience – in a way it made me begin to experience my body as integrated whole."

As a solution she made a "second skin" on which to perform the rituals; a model of her body complete even to embroidered moles, hairs and appendix scar. Making the model helped her to come to terms with her "first skin" but the film was never made. "The nature of my film," she says, "was to communicate to women how I was feeling about myself but this would have meant them being involved in the same kind of activity. I think for women to build up any significant working situation they must first commit themselves to developing close contact and communication between themselves." She believed that the Radnor Terrace project was premature because the women involved were working together without sufficient emotional commitment and contact.

breaking free

In the front room upstairs were some of the pictures Shireen, Clara, Joy and Martine have been working on. The group began to meet to paint and to discuss each other's work 5 months ago, and the exhibition included one canvas that they have been working on jointly. They also exhibited their note books and sketch books, which revealed the thoughts and motivation behind the house in the form of old essays, sketches, lists, postcards, plans, poems, cuttings, quotations and photographs.

As an exhibition it was light years away from the art market and conventional shows. It was initiated by the artists themselves not for profit but as an experiment in working together. In fact it was the way they got the show together as much as the content of the house which overturned the accepted idea of a women's relationship to the home. They worked on the home as a group instead of in isolation, creating a public instead of a private environment.

It was criticised for being too depressing and too propagandist. Yet patriarchal society has always used art to propagandise particular limited and limiting images of women; mother, muse and sex object. Both Radnor Terrace and Womanhouse in Los Angeles (S.R. No.14) are necessary steps towards breaking free of the stereotypes.

Rosie Parker

Working at Radnor Terrace

Books

Women and Madness

By Phyllis Chesler

Allen Lane £4.00

Some will say this book is not scientific. It is not, in the usual sense, and is not meant to be. Some will say it is polemic. It is, imaginative and impassioned. Openly involved in the problems under discussion; caring about women's internalized oppression, the best sort of polemic - convinced, honest, hoping to convince others. Erratic, full-blown, studded with insights, taking on too many parts of the social problem in one go, failing to present all the solutions: all true. But for those reasons, because this book is more like a person than a scholarly treatise, although Chesler *did* do her homework well, it takes us on a journey into an unaccustomed land, for many of us, with a volatile, voluble guide, who is determined we shall at least notice each aspect of the landscape. In this land, we must alter our world views: more of the sky is visible, we must also look carefully how we go. We are in danger. With Chesler we explore that mine field from Greek mythology to current mental hospitals - in this land our sanity is in question. Women in myth and symbol, women in contemporary society and women's relation to psychiatric institutions are the intersecting paths. Along the way, we look with fresh eyes at: sex between patient and therapist, psychiatrically institutionalized women, third world women, lesbians and feminists.

Chesler introduces *Women and Madness* with a (purposefully) idiosyncratic look at the lives and fates of five ancient goddesses: Demeter and her daughters Persephone, Psyche, Athena and Artemis. All were eventually rendered

powerless. Greek myths made acceptable symbolic tales out of the take-over by the ancient Greeks of the pre-Hellenic matriarchies, in which women ruled religion, warfare, procreation: in every area they were dethroned and made powerless. The myths came to be chief agents in preventing a return to the old ways. Twentieth century social habit, and therefore psychiatry, carries on the function of the myths: old myths have given way to modern stereotypes of women. Throughout the book, Greek myths and their successors - other mythologized women and their symbolic meanings, such as Joan of Arc and the Virgin Mary - help Chesler to spell out the relationship between the contemporary female condition and what we call madness.

The first chapter looks at the lives of four women who were hospitalized: Elizabeth Packard, Ellen West, Zelda Fitzgerald and Sylvia Plath Hughes. Of them, Chesler sums up: "all were uncommonly stubborn, talented and aggressive... For years they denied themselves or were denied - the duties and privileges of talent and conscience. Like many women, they buried their destinies in romantically extravagant marriages, in motherhood, and in approved female pleasure. However, their repressed energies eventually struggled free, demanding long overdue and therefore heavier prices: marital and maternal 'disloyalty', social ostracism, imprisonment, madness, and death."

This leads Chesler to one of her most important imaginative leaps. Mothering. None of these women, few of us and none of our mothers have had it. In Western art, Madonnas comfort and worship infant sons. Without land or money to cede to daughters, most mothers can give only "the legacy of capitulation - via frivolity or drudgery." All children originally require, and most receive, mother-love in early infancy. Boys retain their love

attachment to mother, girls must make the difficult re-attachment to father. Freud understood this, but not the reasons for it. One of these is: "mothers must be harsh in training their daughters to be feminine in order that they learn how to serve in order to survive. This harshness traditionally characterises fathers training their sons to be 'masculine'. Any society with sex-role ste-

reotypes implies an often crippling harshness between adults and children of the same sex." Both trainings harm children. But boys grow up to take their positions in patriarchal privilege and power, girls do not. What Chesler is advocating becomes clearer later: since we cannot go back and be re-mothered, we should extend to each other all the loving supportiveness for our talents,



'mothers must be harsh in training their daughters to be feminine.'

strengths and activities which we missed. The road to sanity is Mother-Sisterhood. "Women involved in such an ego transformation... would, by necessity, withdraw from all human interactions which are not extremely supportive of their survival and achievement of individual power... Women need only transfer the primary force of their 'supportiveness' to themselves and to each other - and never to the point of self-sacrifice".

From mothers to madness. What is this malady which afflicts 62% of the adult population in American outpatient clinics, 61% of the adults in private hospitals, 60% of the adults in general psychiatric wards, and 2/3 of the patients in Community Mental Health Centers and in private psychotherapeutic treatment? There can be no single answer and Chesler doesn't attempt one. She recognizes the presence in both men and women of purely psychotic illness. But she points out, that out of the 60 women she interviewed about their psychiatric experiences, only a minority experienced a genuine state of madness. "Most were simply unhappy and self-destructive in typically (and approved) female ways." The most controversial and inspired summary of the situation follows. "What we consider 'madness', whether it appears in women or in men, is either the acting out of the devalued female role or the total or partial rejection of one's sex-role stereotype."

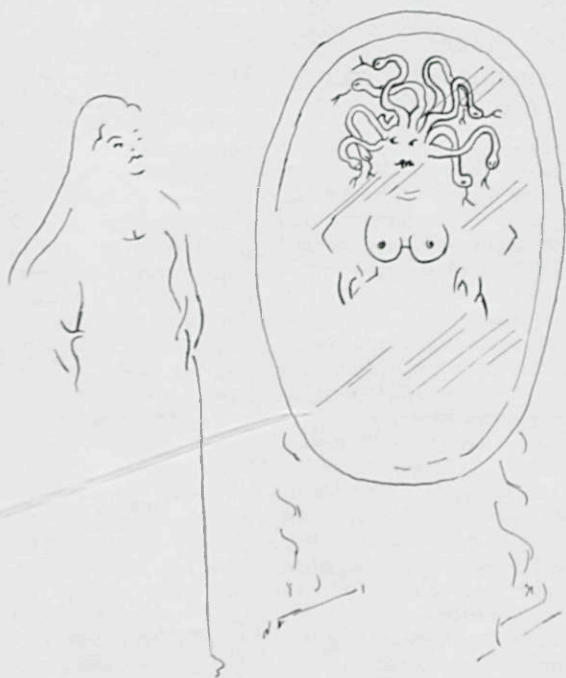
That is to say, both women who step outside their approved role into a more 'male' one, of violence, aggression, verbal hostility and indifference to

their bodies and appearance (all of which are taken by various researchers to be characteristics of female 'schizophrenics'); and, women who take their role to its logical conclusion into depression, chronic fatigue states, frigidity, suicide attempts, are psychiatrically incarcerated. Note this observation and its implications: "Married men seek psychiatric help less frequently and remain in asylums for shorter time periods than do married women or single men. Homosexuals, although psychiatrically 'labeled' and legally prosecuted, seek help less frequently than lesbians do and, like male schizophrenics, still exhibit fewer (devalued) female traits than do lesbians or female schizophrenics."

This situation is a social one. Chesler believes that women's position in society is untenable, psychologically speaking, and leads to neurosis and facile psychiatric labelling. She proves her point thus:

A questionnaire given to 79 male and female clinicians consisted of 122 opposite items, each describing a particular behavior or trait. For example: very subjective - very objective; not at all aggressive - very aggressive, etc.

The clinicians checked off those traits representing healthy male, healthy female or healthy adult (sex unspecified) behaviour. The results showed that they had different standards of health for men and women. Concepts of healthy mature men did not differ significantly from concepts of healthy mature adults, but the concepts of healthy mature women did differ sig-



'Old myths have given way to modern stereotypes of women.'

nificantly from those for men and adults. Clinicians suggested that healthy women differ from healthy men by being more submissive, less independent, less adventurous, more easily influenced, less aggressive, less competitive, more easily hurt, more emotional, more conceited about their appearance, less objective, and less interested in math and science.

Chesler's comment: "It is clear that for a woman to be healthy she must 'adjust' to and accept the behavioural norms for her sex even though these kinds of behaviour are generally regarded as less socially desirable. This double standard of mental health, which exists side by side with a single and masculine standard of human mental health, is enforced by both society and clinicians. Although the limited 'ego resources', and unlimited 'dependence', and fearfulness of most women is pitied, disliked, and 'diagnosed' by society and its agent-clinicians, any other kind of behaviour is unacceptable in women!" Damned if you do, damned if you don't.

Do women get the help they either seek or are involuntarily hospitalized to receive? Emphatically, no. For four

reasons, which I will only summarize:

1. The professions of psychiatry and psychology are numerically dominated by men.

2. Most contemporary female and male clinicians, whether they are disciples of a particular psychoanalytic or psychological theory or not, share and act upon traditional myths about 'abnormality', sex-role stereotypes and female inferiority.

3. Most traditional psychoanalytic and therapeutic theories and practices perpetuate certain misogynistic views of women and of sex-role stereotypes as 'scientific' or 'curative'.

4. Both modern and traditional ideologies are played out within the institution of private therapy, which is, like that of the mental asylum, a mirror of the female experience in patriarchal culture.

Chesler's comments on clinicians and theoreticians are incisive. She criticizes in turn Freud, Wilhelm Reich, Ronald Laing David Cooper and Thomas Szasz. All ascribe to a double standard of mental health and/or to many patriarchal myths about 'femininity' - e.g. female inferiority or female evil.

From madness back to mothers. In the

ance - something they did not receive from their own mothers or husbands, something, like Demeter, they may hope to receive from their daughters. Thus, 'rebellious' daughters are treated harshly by their mothers as the deserting lovers and companions they are meant to be. The female 'policing' phenomena is rooted in an anguish of powerlessness."

Chesler asserts that groups, which for any reason, kill the individual spirit and enforce conformity, which try to make each person 'manageable' rather than to enhance each person to 'unmanageable' and unique levels which the group supports are 'male' and 'female' groupings rather than human ones. "Such groupings cannot provide women with the strength to gain power and to redefine power, sexuality, and work."

She goes on to consider the importance of understanding Amazon societies: not as a model to emulate, but to realize, in social and body terms, how far we've descended from power. "To those who think I am suggesting that we have a war between the sexes, I say; but we've always had one - and women have always lost it... What is new, however, is the desire to either end the war or turn the 'losers' into 'winners'." Her psychological prescription for the future? "Any woman who successfully becomes interested in and begins to achieve various powers directly, and not through a 'man' or a 'family' is, within the psychological kingdom of patriarchy, committing a radical act, i.e., an act that risks 'winning'."

A saddening and inspiring book. Saddening because it is honest about women's status and mental states. As we are our bodies, so we are, each of us, our experience of our society. And so is each psychiatrist, therapist, psychologist, who hands out non-help. Inspiring because, having seen all this clearly, Chesler retains optimism. Beyond being our bodies and our conditioning, we have minds. We can break patterns. Once our situation, in all its detail, is understood, we can go on to - what? At the least, sanity ■

Carol Morrell

Long Distance by Penelope Mortimer Allen Lane 2.50

Penelope Mortimer says of her new book 'Long Distance' (Allen Lane, £2.50), "it's a very ambiguous novel, very open to personal interpretation." The 'plot' - if such dreamlike events can be said to be a plot - concerns a woman who joins various other people in a large country mansion run by the Administration, the Office, rumours of whose doing and intentions circulate constantly in the community.

There, the woman thinks, fantasises, experiences: a dependency on one 'inmate', a sexual fumble with a gardener, disjointed conversations with an old woman, a growing fondness for a dog. She makes attempts to find out where she is, what she is there for, who the others are, why the mansion exists. At a certain point "for a change of scene" she is dumped in a chaotic house and left to cope with dishevelled, hungry, demanding children; bring order to hopeless disorder. Removed, again, to the mansion she tries to escape and is shipped to the Administration by the

gardener. Kindly, with ferocious dedication, They put her into the hospital wing, where she learns to pretend to being well, unworried, reassuring to the worried nurses, secretive about a love affair.

At the last, she is recruited by the Administration after an episode of reckless debauchery that seems, in their eyes, to put her on their side. She must now spy on the other 'inmates', report their conversations in, of course, their own interests. She divides into two women; one still the feeling, searching member of the community, the other more worldly, more cynical, distant, better dressed. She acknowledges her permanent residence in the mansion, 'living at a long distance from everything I knew, seeing it very clearly', making desultory plans to visit some child on the estate, listing the vegetables growing satisfactorily in the garden.



Jill Tweedie

The quotation at the front of the book, from George Santayana, reads "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it". I would substitute for 'remember' 'understand'. Ms Mortimer said in an interview that one person who knew her very intimately found the book absolutely incomprehensible. It seems to me quite frighteningly comprehensible and though this may reveal rather more about me than about the book, this is obviously part of Ms. Mortimer's intention.

Though the story could be interpreted as anything from government regimentation versus the individual to an analysis of the writer's colony where Mrs. Mortimer wrote the book, for myself the theme is a woman's life, many women's lives. That there are some men in the community as well indicates only that some men, too, are victims of society's conditioning - it cannot be accidental that those men are either gently homosexual, extremely sensitive or off-handedly butch. Life, it seems, 'happens' to women without giving them time to clarify their thoughts and the meaning of events escapes them to a greater degree than men. In order to understand, even to remember, you must withdraw to the mansion, ponder and, perhaps, live through the events again, strapped upon the wheel until recognition dawns.

When she first comes to the mansion, the woman thinks obsessively of a man left outside, fears her submergence in him - "it is vitally important... that I do not look out through your eyes, for if I did I would lose sight of myself...". A fear - indeed, a fact - for many women. The childish sexual episode with the gardener, her attraction to the old woman who regards her with a tetchy affection, I equate with memories of the woman's parents. It is, ironically, the gardener who encourages her to escape, "you should soar, soar..." and then

... the mental asylum, a mirror of the female experience in patriarchal culture!



last chapter, Chesler revisits Demeter and Persephone to say: "Whatever Earth Mother qualities women retain are lavished almost exclusively on sons and husbands. Persephone has become Cinderella, struck dumbly domestic by a Demeter turned stepmother. This, if anything, is the female version of exile from the earthly paradise... daughters and (step)mothers today, unlike Demeter and Persephone, are characterized by self-hatred and mutual mistrust... Today, women grow up in households where adult members of their sex do not have Demeter's power. (Step)mothers accept or glorify their servitude, sublimate their sexuality and intellect, and punish their (step)daughters when they rebel against such a role. These conditions

lead to the development of certain psychological traits... self-sacrifice, feelings of guilt, conservative postures, inflexibility, 'nesty' materialism, great social protestations of 'happiness'... backed up by even greater private declarations of unhappiness." A stinging portrait. Chesler goes on to examine women in groups, of whatever nature (feminist too) and finds too often the phenomenon of 'the policing of women by women'. Her explanation of this is intriguing. "The sacrifice of 'differences', of uniqueness, is deeply tied to the female's endless cycle of biological reproduction and cultural impotence... Mothers initiate daughters into the sacred sisterhood of discontent not only in order that daughters survive. Mothers are lonely and need nurtur-

hardly remembers her when she comes to him for help conscientiously handing her over to the Administration as a good gardener/daddy should.

And then, what is expected of her in the chaotic house? How can she manage the unwashed, uncaring children? She becomes fond of one baby, he grows and leaves her and never writes. She thinks occasionally of the man 'outside' but 'our love for each other, compared with this marathon I am now engaged in, was, is and will be trivial'. Almost too obvious, this.

The final schizophrenia is the superficial learning process forced on anyone who wishes to survive. Act as if you understood, smile brightly, appeared to have joined The Office, give up the questioning for the quick pleasurable answer.



Penelope Mortimer

Ms. Mortimer writes with illuminating clarity of mysterious things. I became instantly irritated as I began to read: What?, I mumbled. Where? How? Why? The irritation rose to a peak and died away, then, for good. Unease, vexation came, not because I could not understand but because I could, unconsciously at first, understand all too well■

Jill Tweedie

Film

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The subscription rates have gone up because postage has increased from 4p to 7p, and the magazine now costs 30p (For explanation see pages 24/25 issue 24.)

Theatre

Go West, Young Woman

—
by Pam Gems Women's Company, directed by Su Todd and Ann Mitchell, musical directory Bobby Campbell

Pam Gems' play is an ambitious first project for the Women's Company, one of the two groups which have emerged from the Women's Theatre Group, which was itself formed early in 1973 and put on the first Women's Theatre Festival at the Almost Free theatre in London.

The play is a sweep across 1850s America, following the anticipations, fortunes and hardships of a wagon trail of migrants to the golden West, land of golden wealth and painted savages panting for the word of God – or so run some of the myths for the Easterners and new European immigrants. The play juxtaposes narrative and historical scenes, rather than following a plot or

story line, although there is a very rough framework in the 'characters' on the wagon trail, in particular the Weeks family, a posh New England group, where father at the beginning is very much boss, and Mum and daughters are absorbed in fashion, tea-cups and giggles. Alongside the experiences of the migrants are other scenes, set rather like side-plates in lighted pools on the edge of the action, in which the progress of the relationships between the white men and the Indians are charted; from the Indians extending hospitality to the white men, to their complete subjection and the destruction of both people and culture.

Two main points emerge from the play: one is the violent contrast between the naivete of all the migrants before their trip and the harsh reality of weeks of hard riding, then walking, with little food or water, and the supreme irony, after their ordeal is over that the new railroad will almost fly over the territory they have just suffered and died along - only two women (from the Weeks family) survive. The second is what I could perhaps call a feminist historical readjustment: a feminism evident in the kinds of facts selected for the social documentary, in which the experience of women is given space (numerically more so, as there are eleven women in the cast and three men) alongside that of men. The form in which this takes place is through their struggle for survival. From rather feminine concerns at the beginning, all the women are forced to struggle for the bare essentials of survival - food, water, some relief from the dust - to care for children, to bury dead babies.

Our view of the stereotyped female in the West is readjusted both by showing other kinds of women, and also by one of the best scene in the play, a bar-room

scene in the second half where two prostitutes (one black American, one white Liverpool) encounter a Dutch Presbyterian woman, terrified of the Wild West, and a woman who has been in the West for 20 years and lives the life of a man, gun-toting and whisky-swallowing. They all have their ways of surviving, and talk among themselves consciously as women, with a thought and irony which is latent in other parts of the play, but never so clearly brought out as here. Ironically, this is one of the few parts of the play, according to Pam Gems, which is 'made up', and doesn't consist of authentic material, from diaries and other documentary sources. This may be one reason for a certain awkwardness in the play's overall structure and in its semi-stylised production.

There is an unease about the integration of historical 'background' and the close-up focus on the women, partly because so much information is conveyed in the short historical scenes, not all of which touches on the lives and experiences of the characters who become a sort of off-centre focus. It is difficult to know how much of this discontinuity is due to the vagaries of putting on a production in which the company only got into the theatre for a run-through the day before the first performance; and they had cut some material from the first half on the afternoon of the evening I saw it. Both play and production would probably benefit from a general tightening up, to allow the verve and feminist focuses in it to emerge more clearly. The music is superb throughout - with some eerily orchestrated choral calls from the company which disappear off into the recesses of the Roundhouse, echoing the waste of the country the migrants traversed ■

Micheline Wandor



Music Radio Pollution

Dear Spare Rib,
Following on from the problem of teenage magazines and the roles and attitudes they reinforce, what about the most-listened to radio station - Radio One?

Not only do most of the records played place women in their old role of sex objects and mother substitutes, but these themes are reinforced by disc jockeys, some more so than others. For instance, on a live show, a little girl was asked what she would like to be - her hesitation was met with promptings such as, 'Do you want to be a nurse... a secretary?'

The collecting of photographs of female listeners, the remarks the dj's make about 'going steady' and marriage, even to people of about 16 who have written in, all contribute to reinforce old attitudes. This is added to with Radio Luxembourg and other commercial stations, where teenage insecurities are played on for commercial ends.

This goes back to the old problem of control. How much pressure is being put on these organisations which enjoy so much power over the minds of the young, not to mention all the other people, such as the women whose day is made by a phone call from Tony Blackburn. Who awards them - guess what - a shopping bag if they win his simple little competition.

Yours sincerely,
Angela Waller, Brighton.

His or Hers

Dear Spare Rib,
Just a note I thought you might find interesting. I phoned the Rainbow theatre today, to make an enquiry and when the telephonist answered, I asked her if Joni Mitchell was coming in the near future (I heard on the radio she was). She said 'We can't confirm a date', so I said 'What does that mean?' and she replied 'We don't know. He might be coming or he might not'. Sad isn't it?

Love and peace
Phoebe-Sue Wine. London, N.W.2.
P.S. Keep up the good work!

I phoned her record label to check on the possibility of concerts in this country and was told that there are no plans for the foreseeable future. (But this information might be obsolete by the time this issue reaches the news-stand, bearing in mind Spare Rib copy dates and the unpredictability of show-biz.)

New Womens Liberation Rock Band in Manchester

Dear Sisters,

For a few months now, a group of us have been practicing together in Manchester and we are now able to say that a Northern Women's Liberation Rock Band has been formed. 'We' are Angie (vocals), Angela (drums), Carol (piano), Frances (guitar), Jennie (bass) and Lucia (vocals). We hope to be ready to play a few numbers at the Edinburgh Conference.

Women's part in music seems usually to have been limited to vocals and the occasional star soloist. Particularly in rock music, with outstanding exceptions like Fanny and Birtha, almost all groups are male. Even in the States, where the Women's Movement is much more developed than here, The New Women's Survival Catalogue lists only a few groups. So we think it is quite important to have women's groups playing for women and making our own music. Ours is the second in Britain (we think).

We have enough equipment to make sound on, but it is very poor quality - for instance, we have had to box up two old speakers ourselves. Our instruments are very cheap and don't really give good sound. Good equipment is very expensive so may we appeal to anyone who thinks that this is worthwhile to help us?

If anyone can help, contact:
Angie, Manchester Womens Centre, 218 Upper Brook Street, Manchester, Lancs.
In sisterhood,
Carol Riddell.

Sell Out



An advertisement for "Drummer" fabric dyes, from Woman's Weekly, February 1922.



Terri Quaye has been singing and playing conga drums for twenty years or more. Her experiences range from teaching conga playing in a New Jersey school to playing for theatre productions, ballet, on LP's and numerous television and radio broadcasts all over the world.

A woman with an endless supply of energy, she is presently playing with Jo'Burg Hawk - a South African band, her own jazz trio and with a group of musicians who are experimenting in 'structured improvisation'.

Teaching congas in a New Jersey school

After a couple of days of following her through rehearsals and gigs, we managed to find time to sit down and talk she, happily preparing for another gig, me, exhausted. We began by talking about Africa...

"I wasn't born in Africa, I was born here, my father's family are from Accra, Ghana, that's where you get the name Quaye, it's from the Gha tribe. I went there for the first time in about 1970 and they know I sing and play congas, so it was an incredible thing when I went back, 'cos it was like one of their daughters coming home.

A couple of days after I arrived I experienced one of the most frightening things in my life as a musician. A bandleader friend of ours was holding a dance in a big hotel, and he asked if I'd play. So at one point in the evening, they put two conga drums in the middle of the floor and Jerry stopped everything and addressed the crowd in Gha. He was saying 'one of our daughters Naakoshie (my Ghanian name) has come back tonight' and you could tell that people were thinking 'OK so she's here but what are those drums doing there?' I was announced and the family were very proud, I counted the musicians in to a pre-arranged number and we roared off. Suddenly the whole crowd went silent and when a few hundred people stop talking, that kind of silence is quite frightening. Nobody was smiling and I thought 'maybe I've done something very wrong' and suddenly one woman got up and started coming at me and about six other women followed her and were running towards me, it was quite a distance. I was in a worried sweat, but kept on playing 'cos I didn't know what else to do and just before they reached me, they burst into smiles and said 'play sister play!' The custom there is that if you're really knocked out with somebody, you stick money on their head and I was showered with all this money. As they did that, the crowd roared and I knew it was alright, but for a minute I didn't know what was happening, God was I frightened!

Yeah, I had a good time there. Down town in the poorer sections, people would bring out drums and we'd sit in back gardens or the gutter and we'd just play together in the streets. That was really nice.

Shortly after that, I did a broadcast on Ghana radio which culminated in a weekly broadcast with Ghanian musicians. Women play an important part in music over there, usually as dancers and in some Ghanian tribes as drummers. Music is really the world's ambassador, you can do a lot of things with music, where talking would fail, you can bring more people together with music than with any words.

Music for 4 Generations

My whole family is in music, it goes back to my great grandfather, who was a church musician, then my grandfather who was the first jazz pianist to come out of Ghana and then my father who was the top jazz singer in this country for many years. Caleb my brother is a musician, my sister plays guitar, my father's mother was a dancer and my mother was a singer. So it was presumed that I would be in music by the way I related to musicians, though my parents assumed I'd be a singer or pianist. When I chose drums, I wasn't discouraged but I guess they found it a bit strange, though not as strange as it would have been to an unmusical family. I was always banging on the table tops and things, I felt it was very natural thing. I think I actually

started when I was about eleven or twelve but remember drums were always accessible to me. My father was a bandleader, so when musicians left their instruments behind, I'd have a go. They'd rehearse at home, or I'd go wherever they were, I was what you'd call the band boy, I'd clean their instruments for them and carry the music.

Are they bongos or congas?

There's a lot of difference between bongo playing, conga playing and playing a drum kit. I can't play bongos, though people assume that if you can play one, then you can play the lot. The bongos are a finger instrument, whereas the congas require the whole of the hand, I can't play a drum kit because I can't get the coordination together - the arms and legs. You don't need a lot of power from the body to play a drum kit, it's all in the wrists, but with congas, you need a hell of a lot of strength and also inner strength - a very strong mind.

For instance, when I was in New York playing for the dancers (*Syvilla Forte's Afro American Ballet*) there was a woman with a withered arm, who would sit in and play some beautiful things on congas. This is the kind of inner-strength I'm talking about, it's the determination that has to come through. Congas aren't given the respect of a separate instrument but no one can dispute that if you add congas to any kind of music, the very nature of the sound lifts the music and musicians and gives the whole thing impetus and drive.

Complete shock!

I remember when I was in the show 'Catch My Soul', I never got to meet any of the women in it because being a drummer, I was put in the men's dressing room! It was funny, one night, Marsha Hunt was coming up onto the top of the set, where I was playing, to do a long speech and when she saw me, she did a double take, it was a complete shock to her that there was a woman playing drums.

Sexual games

Here unfortunately, women are expected to play games to boost the male ego and I don't go along with that. As far as I'm concerned, I'm a drummer and singer, I don't feel that I have to impress anybody and more than that, I don't feel that I have to play their sexual games because that's what it boils down to.

I remember when I had my own show in Germany, one night the band got talking about a woman that played vibes and was getting a lot of work. I was interested in this and tried to find out who she was, they told me that she wasn't that good but she'd bend over and show a lot of cleavage, so she got the bookings. That's one of the games you're expected to play to get work. I've always fought against this and I always will but I must say that it's getting better, things are improving. On the other hand, maybe it's because I'm getting older! Also, you know, if you fight the sexual fight for long enough and you really are determined not to be exploited, then you become a different kind of person, a stronger person and you become looked upon

in a different light. I don't want to say I'm still suffering but I'm still struggling let's say, people don't call me 'one of the boys' but you become an individual and people respect you for that.

The oppressors

Look, I'll tell you another story, this is a few years ago when I was doing my cabaret stuff which I've more or less severed now. Anyway, against my will, I was sent by an agent to do an audition at one of the leading clubs in town. There were quite a few other singers there and when we'd finished, the club owner told me that I could have had the job, but the thing that was wrong with me, was that I wasn't showing any tit! (or tits as I wasn't deformed) So I told him where he could put his job and he said he'd see to it that I'd never ever work in that club, and that was it. Now, shortly after that, a very beautiful friend of mine was appearing at this club and she invited me down. The time came when she was introduced and the curtains flew open and she was doing the whole thing but the funny thing was, a man sitting in the front row, fell asleep.

So, is it the public or is it the clubs that demand this exploitation? The nightclubs here have been meat factories for years and are they ever full? Well, they're not! What keeps them going is their high prices, the escorts they supply and the custom they get from paying off taxi drivers. So let's face it it's not the tits that's pulling them in, is it? I'm saying, things are getting better because, you'll find that these clubs are becoming more and more empty. It's not what the public want, it's what they're having rammed down their throats, the oppression lies with the club owners, promoters and agents and it's the same in the pop world. Another thing, if those half-empty clubs put music on for music's sake, they'd double their audience, men and women would come in together, but no woman wants to go to a meat market. It's the old school of thinking and it's dying out because women, whether it's performers or audiences, don't want to be subjected to that.

When I was working in a club in Beirut, the reason they booked me back was because men were bringing their wives in and one day I even achieved a man bringing in his mother! Now remember we're talking about Beirut where most of the clubs are 'girly' clubs and women are ten steps behind the men. So to begin with, men came, then their wives, then wives would bring in their sisters and women were coming in regularly. Well, you can imagine, the whole place changed, and we'd stay behind and get to meet each other and there was no animosity.

'Respect me, or I'll break your wrists!'

This particular club was where I had to deal with a pianist on the biggest and cruellest ego trip ever, all because he felt I didn't respect him as a woman should. He'd mess up the control desk, night after night, so that I'd have to stop the show and sort out the distortion and feedback. Then when I learned how to work the control desk myself, he threatened to break both my wrists and even when the management restrained him from doing that, he'd sit in the front row during my show and ▶



sing out of tune, just loud enough to put me off. Ooh it got very heavy! But that's what I mean about needing strength.

Musical reflections

If you won't compromise and become a sex object then you have to become more confident in what you believe and it stretches to your views on other subjects i.e. politics. You can't help but combine the two. With Jo'burg Hawk, I sing in two african languages. The base of the group are black South Africans, I'm part African, part West Indian, and as we've all experienced racism our material is obviously politically biased.

I believe that the music that you play (you can't do it all the time obviously) should reflect yourself and that's the barrier between the pop world and the other forms of music - reggae, jazz, blues and so on. The pop world doesn't reflect the person. Even the way I play drums reflects me completely, your music is everything that you are and the most important thing is to relate to people as people.

Complete control

Music is my living and I'll keep on travelling

because I draw things from new places. But the most important thing of all is that I have complete control over what I do, I insist on it. Maybe you would have heard of me if I'd put my life into someone else's hands, maybe you'd have my records at home. But most probably that person would be a man and no matter how kind or considerate he might be, he would still have been brought up as a man and it wouldn't work. His values would be different to mine, his expectations and his sensitivity would be different to mine so he'd be thinking what a woman should be - which is not the same as what a woman is.

I've been working for a hell of a lot of years and I'm still here, I'm still playing and I'm still my own person. I'm really pleased to be around at this time because I can see the improvement, not just here but all over the world, it's changing everyday, women are getting stronger and this is great. It just takes time and also for women who are in the position to - to set a good example, a strong example. When women can fight and men can cry, then we'll be getting somewhere. There, that's ending on an optimistic note. ■

MUSIC NEWS...

Ten year old **Lena Zavaroni** being billed in American trade advertisements as 'The First Red Hot Mama Of The Seventies'. . . 'Helen Reddy?' never heard of her' said Capitol radio when I tried to find out the name of the programme that was on last week-end (June 15/16th) which had Helen Reddy talking about her life and music. Anyway it was a really inspiring programme. She makes her film debut in 'Airport '75' as a nun. . . Warner still trying to organise a British tour for Maria Maldaur. . . **Joan Baez** for major British outdoor event this sum-

mer? . . . **Ronettes** coming back here again for a four week tour starting July 26th. . . Blue Mink split, **Madeline Bell** and Roger Cook decided to go their separate ways. . . **Maggie Bell's** projected British tour now being postponed until October. . . MCA finalising plans for **Martha Reeves** major European tour, with British dates during October. . . **Yvonne Elliman** who played the part of Mary Magdelene in 'Jesus Christ Superstar' joins Eric Clapton's new band as vocalist and guitarist. 23 American tour dates planned from June 28 - August 4,

with two warm-up concerts in Stockholm and Copenhagen but no British dates envisaged. New album '461 Ocean Boulevard' features same musicians appearing on tour. . . Following **Melanie's** first London concert for almost two years at Drury Lane Theatre there's possibility of more British dates September/October. . . **Kiki Dee** releasing single in July 'I've Got The Music In Me' on Rocket. . . **Linda Lewis** enjoying much success on her tour in America, another American tour being hastily arranged as soon as she gets back from Japan and Australia. Also planning to record new album in America in the Autumn - Stevie Wonder to produce? Linda's British tour dates here in late July. . . **Nancy Sinatra** who recently had a daughter is also in the process of writing a book on her father. . . Possibility of **Linda Ronstadt** tour in the autumn say Asylum. . . **Tina Turner** to take the role of 'Acid Queen' in movie version of 'Tommy'. . . Women in IPC Business (music) press pressuring for a creche? . . . Love and wishes for a complete recovery to **Julie Driscoll** who was recently hurt in a car accident. Also to **Frankie**, the drummer with 'A Woman's Band' which is the Women's Liberation rock band, who broke her arm in a motorbike accident. . . New Musical Express continue to find it necessary to decorate their 'Gig Guide' pages with 'girlie' glamour photo's. . . Melody Maker's Chris Charlesworth ends review of Fanny's concert in New York by saying 'They're not bad. . . for girls'. . . Women in Music Collective hoping to set up a series of workshops, where women who can play/are interested in learning to play or are just interested, can get together. We're trying to find somewhere to hold them, anyone who has any ideas or would like to come along, get in touch. . . Been asked if I know of a womens marching band to accompany demonstrations, anyone who knows of one or is thinking of starting one, please get in touch ■

Continuing the women's album release listings, with a couple of April / May additions to last month's list.

April		
Cleo Lane	'Live At Carnegie Hall'	RCA
May		
Clydie King & Brown Sugar	'Brown Sugar Featuring Clydie King'	Polydor
Contraband	'Contraband'	Transatlantic
Slapp Happy	'Slapp Happy'	Virgin
June		
Gladys Knight & the Pips	'Claudine'	Buddah
Billie Holiday	'Voice Of Jazz Volume 8'	Verve
Sunny	'Doctor's Orders'	CBS
Carla Bley	'Tropic Appetites'	Virgin
Olivia Newton-John	'Long Live Love'	EMI
Cilla Black	'In My Life'	EMI
Helen Reddy	'Love Song For Jeffrey'	Capitol
July		
Ashford & Simpson	'I Wanna Be Selfish'	Warner
Cass Elliot	'Don't Call Me Mama Anymore'	RCA
Dolly Parton	'Jolene'	RCA
Juliet Greco	'Je Vous Attends'	RCA
Gigliola Cinquetti	'Go'	CBS
Alice Coltrane/Carlos Santana	'Illuminations'	CBS
Diahann Carroll	'Diahann Carroll'	Tamla Motown
Brenda Lee	'The Brenda Lee Story'	MCA
Mae West	'Original Voicetracks From Her Greatest Movies'	MCA
Toni Brown	'Good For You Too'	MCA
Syreeta Wright	'Stevie Wonder Presents'	Tamla Motown
August		
Kryisia	'Kryisia'	RCA
Janis Ian	'Stars'	CBS
Lynn Anderson	'Smile For Me'	CBS

'The Best Of The Marvelettes' album which was listed last month for July release, has now been postponed until Autumn.

Marion Fudger

LI SHUANGSHUANG

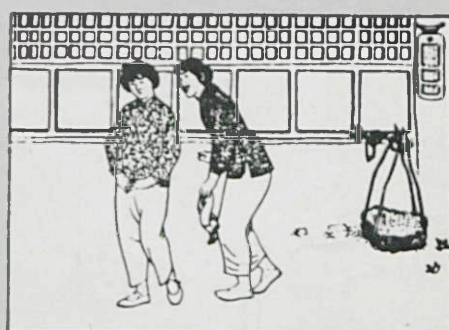
Li Shuangshuang carries on her life in the village without her husband.



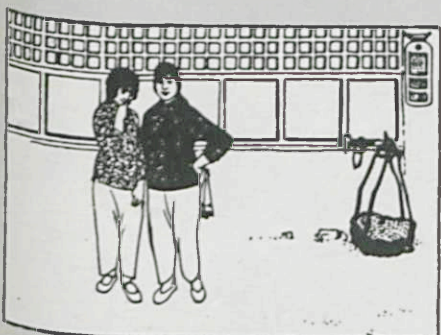
127. The more Shuangshuang went around to the women in their homes, the more they rallied round to follow her. On this particular day Shuangshuang bumped into Gui Ying just as she was leaving the office. Gui Ying held on to Shuangshuang's arm and said, "Auntie, I was just looking for you! Hurry up, hurry up!"



128. Shuangshuang hurriedly asked, "What's the matter? What's made you so flustered?" Gui Ying explained that her mother had told Jin Qiao to find a fiancé for her in the town and that today he was coming to ask her hand. Shuangshuang asked her what she intended to do about Er Chun. Gui Ying blushed. "I don't know."



129. "Silly, this is no time for hemming and hawing! Hurry up and say what you think of Er Chun." Shuangshuang began laughing and Gui Ying quickly replied, "I've never thought of him! How can you laugh when someone's in such a state? ..."



130. Shuangshuang stopped laughing and said, "Really—what time does the man come?" Gui Ying said, "Right now!" Shuangshuang thought for a moment and then asked what his name was and then said, thinking aloud, "It looks as if I'd better go and see what's going on!"



131. She rushed straight off to Sun You's gateway. Sun Youpo wearing new clothes and brilliant make-up, was standing by the gateway looking up and down waiting for somebody. As soon as she saw this scene, Shuangshuang realized that the prospective husband had not yet arrived and she quickly went on towards the edge of the village.



132. After a while a man appeared, coming along the main road, and asked an old woman the way. Shuangshuang heard that he was asking the way to Sun You's and guessed that it was the prospective husband. She called out, "Aren't you Xiao Wang, the truck driver?"



133. Xiao Wang, dressed in his best suit, responded with surprise and started to get uneasy. Shuangshuang smiled and said, "I knew you were going to come today!" Xiao Wang felt even more uneasy and was speechless for a long while before inquiring, "Ah, is auntie in good health?"



134. Shuangshuang asked, "You've come to get engaged, haven't you? Do you know Gui Ying?" Xiao Wang blushed and said, "I haven't met her yet but as soon as we meet, I'll know her. I'm a very open type of person."



135. Shuangshuang laughed and said, "I'm Gui Ying's aunt and Gui Ying has asked me to tell you that she doesn't know you, doesn't understand you, and moreover she's already got a fiancé in the village. ..."



136. Xiao Wang looked as if a pail of cold water had been tipped over him, and Shuangshuang said, "Comrade, it's not your fault. It is Gui Ying's mother who wants to marry her to you so that you will take Gui Ying with you to live in the town." Xiao Wang waved his arm vigorously. "That's no good. Today marriage is freely entered into by principles!"



137. Shuangshuang then pressed him to go and see Gui Ying, but he hurriedly said, "Oh no, there's been a slight misunderstanding! Please tell Comrade Gui Ying that I wish to apologize to her." With this he left.



138. Not long after Xiao Wang had left, a cloud of dust appeared on the road outside the village and Jin Qiao, Sun You, and Xiwang, each driving a large cart, came hurrying into sight. When Xiwang saw the men and women all happily at work he couldn't help remembering his own worries.

More next month.

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